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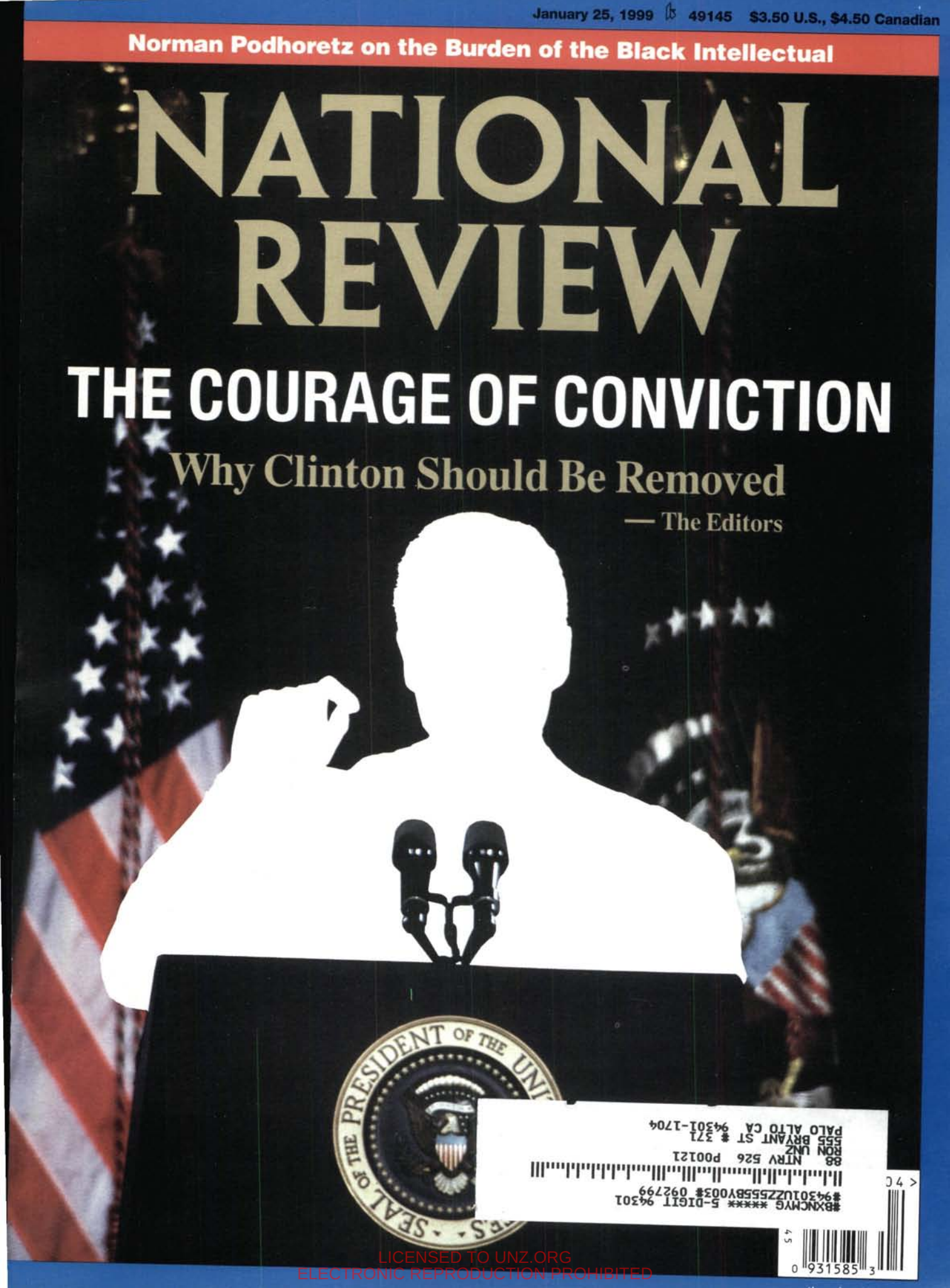
Norman Podhoretz on the Burden of the Black Intellectual

NATIONAL REVIEW

THE COURAGE OF CONVICTION

Why Clinton Should Be Removed

— The Editors



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NATIONAL REVIEW

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■ LETTERS ■

PEACEMEAL

In "The Perils of Peace" [Dec. 21] Norman Podhoretz points out an important fact: "Israelis truly want peace" but can only have it when Arabs "have decided that they can live with a sovereign Jewish state in their midst." The fact that most Israelis support the Wye Agreement and most Arabs oppose it is an argument in favor of Podhoretz's position.

Hamas and other rejectionists have done everything possible to oppose the Oslo Agreements; in particular, they planted bombs to persuade Israelis to vote against Shimon Peres and for Benjamin Netanyahu—not expecting that Netanyahu would himself agree to withdraw from territory for the sake of peace. Hamas knows what is has to lose: if the day ever comes when Israel has normal diplomatic and economic relations with its neighbors, Arab rejectionists will have lost forever. That is why Hamas is doing everything it can to prevent a Palestinian state from coming into being.

George Jochnowitz
The City University of New York
Staten Island, N.Y.

RACE POLITICS

Ramesh Ponnuru hit the nail on the head: the Republican Party needs black voters ["Minority Outreach," Dec. 21]. The departure of House Speaker Newt Gingrich is a start, but it is clear the party also needs to remove its undergrowth of monochromatic strategists and operatives who do not understand an increasingly multiracial and multiethnic electorate.

Conservative strategist Don Devine blames the media for allowing Democrats to demonize the GOP with racial fearmongering in the last election, but he really should blame the Republican party, which spent none of its $37 million "Operation Breakout" advertising budget on black radio or black newspapers. As the saying goes, you can't beat something with nothing.

Faye M. Anderson
National Vice Chairman
New Majority Council
Republican National Committee
Washington, D.C.

THE JOYS OF CHRISTMAS

Aloïse Buckley Heath's Christmas story ["It Says Here. . . ," Dec. 31], is one of the things I really enjoy during the holidays. My wife and I have only three children, aged 11, 7 and 2. And though we both dream of the days when there will be time for spontaneity, we also think—like Mrs. Heath—that family time is magical. My thanks to you and NATIONAL REVIEW for this Christmas tradition.

Jimmie A. Irby
Pickerington, Ohio

YOUNG TURKS, OLD FEARS

Your editorial condemning Abdullah Ocalan ["The Week," Dec. 21], "leader of the Kurdish terrorists who wage war against Turkey," ignores Turkey's severe repression of its Kurdish population, including its raising of more than 3,000 Kurdish villages. It is Turkey's refusal to tolerate even moderate Kurds that makes terrorist groups like Ocalan's inevitable.

History has shown that the Turkish state is incapable of treating its ethnic and religious minorities in a civilized manner. One need look only to the Armenian and Pontian-Greek genocides earlier this century, or to the pogroms and deportation of its Greek minority carried out through the 1960s, to understand why the Kurds demand independence. They fear that any alternative would mean continued repression and extinction, as did occur to Turkey's ancient Christian minority.

Theodore G. Karakostas
American Hellenic Media Project
Milton, Mass.

STRONG PREFERENCES

A piece in "For the Record" [Nov. 23] regarding the Campaign for a Color-blind America's 105th Congressional scorecard wrongly stated that more House Democrats than Republicans voted against racial preferences. The scorecard in fact shows that 199 Democrats voted in each of four key votes to impose or preserve racial preferences and quotas, while only about half of Republicans members voted one or more times for preferences.

Marc Levin
Executive Director
Campaign for a Color-blind America
Houston, Tex.

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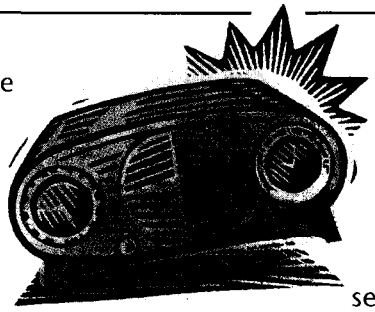

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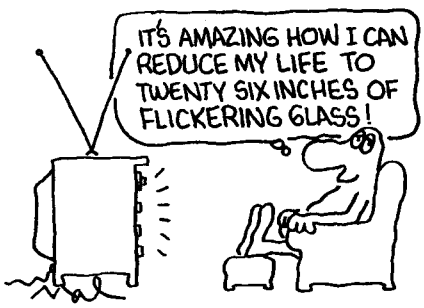
■ FOR THE RECORD ■

■ We the **Clintons**? **Jesse Jackson** at anti-impeachment rally: "Why does America embrace Bill Clinton? Because they embrace the Bill Clinton that is them. . . ." *Time*'s **Margaret Carlson**: "We all have a little Clinton in us." . . . Vice President **Gore** on his boss's impeachment: "[It] does a great disservice to a man I believe will be regarded in the history books as one of our greatest presidents." . . . National Park Service at President **Andrew Johnson**'s preserved 19th-century home in Tennessee tapes over words "and only" on plaque naming Johnson "the first and only president to be impeached by the House of Representatives." . . . Ten days after own impeachment, Clinton sends wreath to Johnson grave, continuing a little-known tradition of presidents' sending flowers to mark predecessors' birthdays. . . . *Los Angeles Times*'s **Elizabeth Shogren**, on CNN: "I asked him directly, 'How does it feel to be impeached, Mr. President?' And he said, 'Not bad.'"

■ On trip to Israel, President Clinton speaks to Palestinian National Council, mentions "profoundly emotional" experience of meeting "some little children whose fathers had been killed in conflict with Palestinians." *The Forward*, however, reports that Israeli officials say the meeting did not take place. White House doesn't return calls from *Forward*, but disputes account when *NR* asks, saying Clinton shook hands with kids at function. . . . Clinton plans trip to Mexico and Central America Feb. 10–15. . . . **Hillary Clinton** is "technophobic," says President Clinton. "I gave her a little digital alarm clock for Christmas. And she gave it back to me after I talked to her about it, and she said, 'Why don't you just get me one that winds up?'"

■ London betting firm William Hill Organization lays odds for 2000 presidential contest. Texas Gov. **George W. Bush**, 7 to 4; **Lamar Alexander**, 7 to 1; **Dan Quayle**, 40 to 1; Sen. **John Ashcroft** (Mo.), 66 to 1. . . . Sen. **John McCain** (R., Ariz.) forms presidential exploratory committee, with Sen. **Jon Kyl** (R., Ariz.) and former Sen. **Warren Rudman** (R., N.H.) as co-chairmen. (Odds: 66 to 1). . . . **Steve Forbes** tells CNBC he plans to announce intentions "certainly by February." (Odds: 9 to 1). . . . Social Security Administration announces it has fixed Y2K computer problem, circumventing potentially disastrous headache for Gore during 2000 Democratic primaries. (Odds: 1 to 1). . . . Louisiana Republicans worry that former Klansman **David Duke** will run to replace retiring Rep. **Bob Livingston** later this year, but Rep. **Tom Davis** (R., Va.), new head of National Republican Congressional Committee, promises early endorsement of someone else to ensure GOP holds seat without Duke's winning it. . . . Vote to impeach fuels speculation that Rep. **Virgil Goode** (D., Va.) will switch parties. . . . Retiring Speaker **Newt Gingrich** pays



off $300,000 ethics penalty imposed in 1997 for violating congressional rules. . . . Outgoing Washington, D.C., mayor and ex-con **Marion Barry**: "I'm proud of all we accomplished." . . . White House offers New Zealand ambassadorship to just-defeated Sen. **Carol Moseley-Braun** (D., Ill.), reports Associated Press.

■ Census Bureau reports U.S. population on January 1 is 271,645,214, representing projected growth rate of less than 1 percent. Slower growth expected in 1999 because of aging population. Nevada was fastest-growing state in 1998. . . . Early projections for 2000 Census have Arizona and Texas gaining two congressional seats, plus California, Georgia, Florida, Montana, and Nevada earning one. Biggest losers are New York and Pennsylvania (two seats apiece), with Connecticut, Mississippi, Ohio, Oklahoma, and Wisconsin each dropping one. . . . Senate and House candidates spent more than $617 million during 1998 election cycle, slightly less than two years earlier, says Federal Election Commission. . . . National Governors' Association complains that three-year moratorium on Internet taxes could stop them from acquiring additional $20 billion sales-tax revenue annually. . . . Activists in Washington state plan ballot initiatives to cut vehicle license-tag fees to $30 a year and ban legislature from raising taxes without voter approval.

■ Federal court orders National Honor Society to admit Kentucky students **Somer Chipman** and **Chastity Glass**, denied membership last spring because of pregnancies. . . . Former student sues Duke University for sex discrimination in state court, arguing she was kept off football team because of her sex. Previous case was thrown out of federal court. . . . Federal judge overturns Iowa's ban on partial-birth abortion, making it 20th state of 28 passing such laws to have them blocked or overturned.

■ South Korean president **Kim Dae-Jung** expresses regret in Hanoi for his country's participation in Vietnam War. . . . "The Western mode of political systems must never be copied," says Chinese president **Jiang Zemin**. . . . Russia ships second low-noise Kilo-class submarine to China. . . . South Africa's department of health hands out as many as 1 million defective condoms to population with estimated HIV rate of 13 percent among adults, plans "National Condom Week" in run-up to Valentine's Day. . . . Israel sets elections for May 17, less than two weeks after **Yasser Arafat** has promised unilateral declaration of Palestinian independence. Likely runoff scheduled for June 1.

■ Rep. **Dennis Kucinich** (D., Ohio) on Hillary Clinton in *New York Times*: "It's lucky for America we have a woman with the strength to lead the nation right now. And everybody understands she is one of the leaders of the nation right now, as much as the president." Turns out those "Impeach President Clinton—and Her Husband, Too" bumper stickers had a point. **NR**

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Joining **Bill Buckley** and *NR* editors **Rich Lowry**, **John O'Sullivan**, **Kate O'Beirne**, and **Peter Rodman** aboard Holland America Line's luxurious flagship, the MS *Rotterdam VI*, for this once-in-a-lifetime affair will be some of the biggest names of the battle against Communism, including former Defense Secretary **Caspar Weinberger**, former Secretary of State **Alexander Haig**, former White House National Security chiefs **William Clark** and **Richard Allen**, former Senator **Sam Nunn**, former Attorney General **Edwin Meese**, General **Vernon Walters** (former UN Ambassador, CIA nabob, and Ambassador to West Germany when the Wall a-tumbled!), and former Senator **James Buckley**, who ran Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty for the Gipper, (and who's also the brother of you-know-who!). The ***National Review 1999 Baltic Cruise*** will be your once-in-a-lifetime chance to meet the key players and tacticians who fought and triumphed in the epic battle to topple Soviet totalitarianism.

Through seven seminar sessions, numerous social events, and 12 nights of fine dining (when you'll be enjoying intimate meals with our special guests), the ***National Review 1999 Baltic Cruise*** will provide you with a special, unique opportunity to hear the inside story on how some great men and women worked together to pull off the greatest feat of modern times: restoring freedom to hundreds of millions of oppressed people.

Imagine yourself discussing the roll-back of the Soviet threat with **Caspar Weinberger**. Or finding out from **William Clark** and **Vernon Walters** how Ronald Reagan forged an alliance with the Vatican to keep Poland's Solidarity movement alive. Or learning from **Ed Meese** the inside-the-Oval Office details of how the Gipper battled the Evil Empire. Or asking **Al Haig** how he coordinated anti-Soviet policies with America's allies. Or finding out from **Sam Nunn** the key support this fight received from Democrats (well, some Democrats). Or hearing from **Jim Buckley** how an embattled American radio outfit kept hope alive for millions

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July 22, 1999, will be a great day for *NR* cruisers. Early that morning the *Rotterdam VI* will dock in Warnermünde, Germany, where we'll hop on a luxury train for a trip through the lush countryside. Our destination: Berlin. There, air-conditioned motor coaches will take us from one historic landmark to another, including, of course, the remains of the infamous Wall. From dawn till dusk, you'll enjoy great sights, food, drinks, and companionship. This special bells-and-whistles excursion costs $400 per person. But it's yours, FREE, as *National Review*'s "thank you" for joining us on this once-in-a-lifetime trip!

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of Europeans. Or reliving with **Bill Buckley** his hand-to-hand fighting in the public arena with America's apologist Left.

All of this can, and will, happen on the ***National Review 1999 Baltic Cruise***. The question is, will you be there?

We hope so. On top of all the discussion of great events, on top of the celebration of the 10th Anniversary of the Berlin Wall's fall, the ***National Review 1999 Baltic Cruise*** will be a phenomenal travel extravaganza that will bring you face to face with northern Europe's most historic cities and most beautiful sights.

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But don't fret: *NR* has a lock on 225 cabins (over 60 are *already* gone!) for this special July voyage—but only for a limited time, so you must act quickly. Here's our schedule:The floating paradise for this special journey is the *Rotterdam VI*, Holland America's new

flagship (everything is in mint condition, and one step above top notch). On board this impeccable vessel you will find every-thing—pools, shops, and lounges galore, plus a casino, java bar, library and puzzle room, spa (with sauna, masseuse, and steam bath), beauty salon, movie theater, tennis courts, running track, and so much more. Whether it's day or night, the *Rotterdam VI* offers you endless entertainment and activities. And as for the sumptuous cuisine, well, it can be summed up in one delicious word: *wunderbar*!

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BORNHOLM, the popular Danish island famous for its glass, ceramics, and herring!;
STOCKHOLM, Sweden's capital, home to such glorious waterways that it's called the "Venice of the North";
HELSINKI, Finland's stunning capital, renowned for its gleaming art and shopping districts, your gateway to Lapland;
ST. PETERSBURG, the ancient home to the Czars where you'll find the Hermitage, the Winter Palace, and the spectacular Cathedral of St. Peter and St. Paul;
MUUGA/TALLIN, Estonia's capital and a tourist's paradise—museums abound in the most "intact" medieval city in Northern Europe; and
COPENHAGEN, the final port for this fantastic cruise, famous for its cobblestone streets and squares (why not stay an extra day or two in this walker's paradise?!).

Even better are the *Rotterdam*'s staterooms—they are elegant and large, and some feature incredible extras (there are many with big, private verandahs—but they're *going fast*!). And on the "Concierge Deck," where the *Rotterdam VI* sports 4 Penthouse Suites (each one some 1,126 square feet) and 36 Suites (565 square feet), there's the

exclusive "Neptune Lounge" (it features a library and a concierge office—with an officer dedicated to handling all your special requests!). No matter which type of cabin you reserve, or in which restaurant you dine, or of what amenities you take advantage, you'll be overwhelmed by Holland America Line's service, style, attentiveness, and grace.

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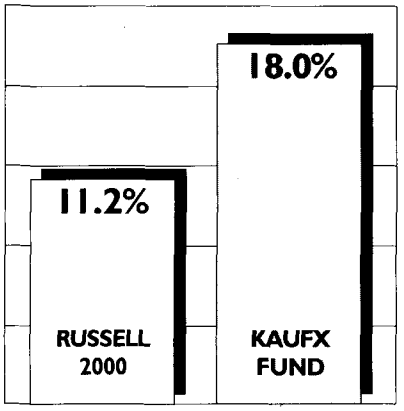

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THE WEEK

■ Should President Clinton deliver the State of the Union address if his trial in the Senate is still pending? If he does, should House members who voted to impeach him, or senators still reserving judgment, listen to him? The answer, in both cases, is yes. While there is no requirement that the president deliver the State of the Union address to Congress in person (19th-century presidents did not, 18th- and most 20th-century presidents did), it is the present custom. Until he is convicted and removed from office, President Clinton is entitled to all the formal respect appertaining thereto. It is out of respect for the office, after all, that his critics wish to remove him from it. Congress should attend, listen courteously—then return to its business, the first order of which is to return Bill Clinton to private life.

■ Another question: Should Senate Democrats endorse censure? Only after resolving the precedential value of the other Senate censure of a chief executive. In 1834, the Whig-led Senate censured Andrew Jackson (the majority questioned the constitutionality of his moves against the Bank of the United States). In January 1837, when Democrats took control of the Senate, they expunged the measure from its records. So, Sens. Lieberman, Daschle, et al.: Will yours be a vote for the ages, or for the moment? The episode was so damaging to Jackson's reputation that Arthur Schlesinger Jr.'s 545-page *Age of Jackson* devotes two sentences to it. Since Prof. Schlesinger unaccountably failed to mention this in his House testimony or full-page newspaper ads, we take the opportunity to advertise his judgment.

■ If George W. Bush has a claim check on the Republican nomination, someone hasn't told his rivals. Elizabeth Dole, who has just resigned from the Red Cross to prepare for a run, poses the biggest immediate threat to him: She has almost as much establishment support, better ties to Christian conservatives, and two X chromosomes. Arizona senator John McCain has also taken the first steps toward a campaign; he might take off if Bush stumbles. The challenge for all of these candidates is to reassure conservatives worried about their unconservative records (Mrs. Dole), recent high-profile policy lapses (McCain of tobacco-tax fame), or genealogies (you know who you are).

■ A different task confronts another field of candidates now taking shape: the social conservatives. Sen. John Ashcroft (R., Mo.) had hoped to monopolize social conservatives' votes, but fundraising difficulties and a strong challenge to his Senate seat in 2000 have forced him out of the race. The social-conservative vote is likely to split among several candidates. New Hampshire senator Bob Smith has announced he will run; Gary Bauer and Dan Quayle will likely do so soon; Pat Buchanan may join them; and Alan Keyes will no doubt continue what is euphemistically called his campaign. Plenty of social-conservative votes will also go to candidates such as Steve Forbes and Mrs. Dole. And this is all to the good. Social conservatives should play the presidential field, the better to be courted. The social Right is most effective when it is absorbed by a broader conservative movement.

■ After a year of denouncing Kenneth Starr and congressional Republicans as "unfair," Clinton defenders have finally hit upon something that actually is unfair. Tom DeLay is ill advised to tout "secret evidence" that may tip the balance in the Senate against the president. The reference is apparently to the now-famous Jane Doe #5, a woman whose allegation (and previous denial) that Bill Clinton sexually assaulted her 20 years ago is part of the never-released supporting evidence of the Starr report. The allegation may have swayed the impeachment votes of a few House Republicans—which raises the procedurally gruesome possibility that an unconfirmed charge, under seal and not available for rebuttal, will be a factor in the impeachment trial of the president. In any case, Republicans don't need more evidence against Bill Clinton, considering how much exists in the case of Jane Doe #6, "that woman, Miss Lewinsky."

■ Given the silky smoothness of former presidential flack Mike McCurry, Bill Clinton may have finally gotten as crude a press secretary as he deserves. Shortly after Bob Livingston's resignation—when porn-peddler Larry Flynt appeared to be striking—Joe Lockhart was asked whether Clinton would do anything to clamp down on his more vicious defenders, starting with Flynt. Lockhart answered, "I don't think we have any control over what a newsmagazine publisher does." (A reporter incredulously asked, "A newsmagazine?") Then, in early January, the relentless Sam Donaldson badgered Lockhart about *Star* (not Starr), the supermarket tabloid: Was it about to drop a major bomb on Clinton's head? After all, Donaldson noted, the tab had been right about Gennifer Flowers and Dick Morris's rendition of "This Little Piggie." Lockhart snapped, "And I'm an alien space baby." Whereupon Donaldson asked for DNA evidence. (As of this writing, Lockhart has coughed up none.) We do not fail to appreciate Lockhart's position: It can't be easy being this president's flack—so much of what's embarrassing, no matter how outlandish, turns out to be true.

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The Quick Senate Trial

Trent Lott will press Fast Forward;
Rehnquist will be a blur,
And Henry Hyde will squeak so high,
He'll make libidos stir.
The senators, though silent,
Will roll their eyeballs till
The chamber tilts like pin-ball games,
Acquitting Big Bad Bill.

—W. H. von Dreele

■ The Rev. Lou Sheldon has announced that he will ask all Republican aspirants to the 2000 presidential nomination whether they have ever committed adultery. The good minister has missed the point of the present ruckus. Many a great leader had this or that vice—Ulysses Grant drank; Benjamin Franklin fathered bastards. But their passions did not rule their lives, least of all their public lives. The case against W. J. Clinton is that 1) he is compulsive; 2) he bends the law to cover his compulsions; 3) he lies reflexively about what he has done; and 4) he committed the formal crimes listed in the articles of impeachment. If men were angels, wrote Madison, we would not need government. If our governors are Clintons, we cannot have good governments.

■ Environmentalists proclaimed that 1998 was the warmest year on record, but the data are not yet in. It's more likely that 1998 will be known as yet another year during which the greens' scare stories failed to come true. Not even the heat of El Niño could raise the earth's temperature enough to match the predictions of the global-warming crowd. Ten years ago, NASA's James Hansen testified that global warming was already here, and that the evidence would soon be irrefutable. Now Hansen writes, "The forces that drive long-term climate change are not known with an accuracy sufficient to define future climate change." New research reveals that greenhouse gases are building up in the atmosphere more slowly, and to less effect, than predicted. The case for a U.N. treaty cools with each new wave of scientific research.

■ Sen. Trent Lott and Rep. Bob Barr (R., Ga.) have come under fire for addressing a philo-southern and allegedly white-supremacist group. If the charges are true, the men undoubtedly did not know the complete agenda of their audience (most speaking engagements are point-and-shoot). Public figures ought, however, to be cautious, and this raises a delicate point, especially for conservatives. Lincoln said in his second inaugural address that both sides in the Civil War called on the same God; he even quoted, "Judge not, lest ye be judged." But he would not have accepted the argument that the pro-slavery side was right, or (in precociously post-modern fashion) that both sides were equally right. The Confederacy may—indeed, should—be honored for its honor, and its bravery. For its principles, no.

■ President Clinton's decision to spend an extra $100 billion on the military over the next six years is too little, too late. Most of the money is not slated for what it is most sorely needed for—modernization, recapitalization of equipment stocks, and spare parts. Of the apparent $12 billion increase for next year, $8 billion comes from savings on fuel costs and lower-than-expected inflation; Clinton is merely allowing the military to keep what it would have had anyway. And almost $5 billion will go to pay for Bosnia and a pay raise for the troops. So while the services will get about two-thirds of what they asked for, they will still be underfunded by an alarmingly huge amount—between $25 billion and $100 billion. Clinton's "turnaround" on defense spending, while welcome in certain respects, will have to be a lot sharper to reverse this crisis, which is clearly one of his own making.

■ The president's proposal to provide tax credits for the long-term care of the elderly is the most market-friendly health-care policy to come out of his administration. But given the realities of aging, providing for long-term care probably requires improved asset management more than it does a reformed health-care system. People should be encouraged to save and invest to provide for their own retirement and that of their parents. It's Social Security that most needs long-term care.

■ A House select committee led by Rep. Christopher Cox

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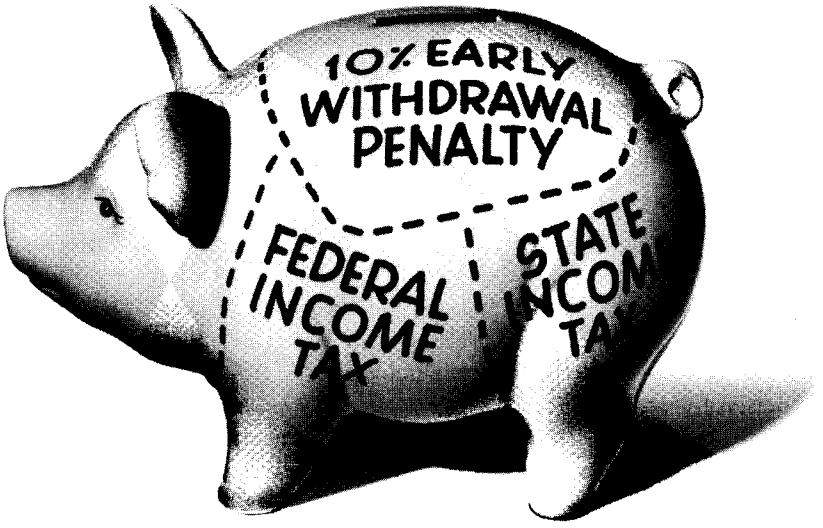

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(R., Calif.) has finished a six-month investigation into China's acquisition of sensitive American military technology. The committee was formed when it was discovered that, through lax Clinton-administration procedures, American corporations assisting China in satellite launches may have helped that nation develop ballistic missiles. But the committee's 700-page classified report uncovers a larger pattern. Over at least two decades, China has obtained sensitive military technology, including nuclear-weapons-design technology stolen from American laboratories. The committee concluded that serious harm has been done to national security and that the Chinese effort persists. The committee's findings were unanimous. They will be particularly painful to an administration that imagines China to be its "strategic partner."

■ When Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's majority collapsed last month, Israeli politics became a free-for-all. Labor leader Ehud Barak, heir of Yitzhak Rabin, scores well in polls, but his party is crumbling. A new centrist party will be led by either former Likudnik Dan Meridor or former chief of staff general Amnon Shahak. Or they both may run. On the right, Benny Begin (son of Menachem) announced his candidacy. Former Likud foreign minister David Levy may join Labor. Netanyahu exudes confidence and should not be counted out in the May 17 election. But the Clinton administration may already have lost an opportunity. It despised Netanyahu from the start, ignoring his strategic advice and playing up to the Palestinians when he had the clout to deliver on a secure peace. Whoever wins this time may not be able to govern at all.

The Georgia Peach

Ol' Ty Cobb could splendidly speak:
His bat, his feet, his arm would reek
With unintended consequences for the wretch
Who threw him a sinker, which he would fetch
Eloquently over the center field wall.
"I knew't! I knew't!" spake the Constitutional
Umpire behind the plate. "You don't pitch
Garbage to a Georgia Peach, except you itch
To activate your internment camp for twenty
Some odd days of good and plenty."
Now he's benched, Ol' Ty is,
And front-porch pondering why is
That garbage-throwing wretch still on the mound.
And he supposes that The Law of CU is often found
To operate like a hit that leaves the bat broken,
And before it has marvelously spoken
Its piece, is one with blue sky, and on its way
To Kingdom Come and Impeachment Day.

—Johannes Eff

■ Hopes for democracy are flickering in Cambodia, where ex-Communist and current thug Hun Sen tightens his stranglehold on power. The good news, though, is the disintegration of the Khmer Rouge as a military and political force. Pol Pot died last April, the Khmer Rouge army has withered away, and its leaders have defected to the government at an accelerating pace. In late December, top leaders Khieu Samphan and Nuon Chea joined the defectors. They said that they were "sorry, very sorry" for the Khmer Rouge genocide that killed somewhere between 1 and 2 million Cambodians in the '70s. But they hoped the country would "move on." Hun Sen seemed to agree, saying that "we should dig a hole and bury the past," meaning: no international tribunal to try the two for crimes against humanity. (Not even a censure.) National reconciliation is a worthy goal, but it's not the same as amnesia.

■ The survival thus far of seven of the octuplets born to Nkem Chukwu of Houston is cause for celebration, but the same cannot confidently be said of the process leading up to it. Children are a gift, not an entitlement, and contemporary fertility treatments threaten to erase the distinction. They also may cause couples to overlook the possibility of adoption. In this case, better medical supervision could have led to the fertilization of fewer eggs and thus a reduced risk to each one. Discussion, however, has focused on whether Mrs. Chukwu should have been forced to practice "selective reduction"—i.e., have some of her children killed. The question of whether "we" should pay for reproductive extravagance arises in the first place mainly because our system of third-party payment for health care socializes costs. This system raises costs and reduces quality. Evidently it also fosters the culture of death.

■ "We are taking away some of the years of adolescence and childhood" from a generation, cautions Milburn, N.J., school principal Martin Burne in a recent "Education Life" feature in the *New York Times*. The unlikely culprit? Too much homework, which one Los Angeles psychologist says is sending kids to therapy in droves for "homework-related anxieties." Keep in mind that, according to the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research, the average amount of time kids spend on homework is 25 minutes a night. Heaven forbid the children miss half of *Dawson's Creek*.

■ Dr. Henry Paolucci belonged to the band-of-brothers phase of the conservative movement. In 1964, the fledgling Conservative Party of New York enlisted him to run against Sen. Kenneth Keating and Robert, then the regnant Kennedy. Dr. Paolucci had a day job, as a professor, nominally of political science, but also of any other subject that caught his avid attention (the translation of Machiavelli's "Mandragola" he and his wife produced 40 years ago is still in print). Nevertheless, he made the gallant, losing run. For the remainder of his life, he advanced his opinions, with their heavy component of nationalism, in the medium of feisty and scholarly articles. R I P.

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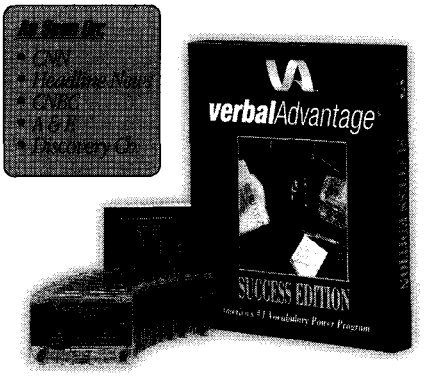

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IMPEACHMENT

Do Justice

As 1998 ended, President Clinton was impeached by the House for lying to a federal grand jury and obstructing justice. As 1999 begins, it is the duty of right-minded senators to try him, convict him, and remove him from office.

The first article of impeachment focused on Mr. Clinton's August 17 testimony before Kenneth Starr's grand jury, where he reprised the lies he had been telling for months: about his relationship with his intern, about his testimony in Paula Jones's civil suit, about his efforts to corrupt witnesses in that suit. The second article focused directly on his campaign to tamper with the testimony of Monica Lewinsky and Betty Currie, which involved hiding evidence, concocting cover stories, and buying silence with jobs. These crimes were not just about Mr. Clinton's private life, or about sex. As investigative counsel David Schippers said in his summation to the House Judiciary Committee, they constituted "a direct assault upon the truth-seeking process, which is the very essence and foundation of the judicial branch." Removing a president from office is a serious matter. But these are serious offenses.

Mr. Clinton's crimes should be considered along with their circumstances, their attendant moral atmosphere: that he perverted justice not for some mistaken notion of national interest but to serve his convenience and to palliate his lust; that his lust combines adolescent combustibility and crazed risk-taking; that, in the twelve months since the scandal first broke, he never showed the courage or the honesty of a real leader, but repeated his lies and evasions in a dozen forums, from press conferences to prayer breakfasts. Add, finally, that no one can confidently deny that his bombings of Sudan, Afghanistan, and Iraq were calculated distractions—to such a state has he brought himself and his office. This is the portrait of a man as bad as he is weak, as corrupt as he is immature.

Mr. Clinton's offenses require a trial. It need not move at the pace of Judge Ito: much of the evidence has been available for months, courtesy of the House, the independent counsel, and the press. But there must be a trial, and deliberation. This is why the job of impeachment is given to senators, who serve the longest terms of any elected official and are assumed to have maturity and independence. The various proposals for a speed-reader's trial, disposed by some means short of a vote on conviction, violate the traditions of the body and its duties in trying a president. If this is the spirit in which the senators intend to approach their task, better to have Lou Harris conduct an exit poll after the new Senate convenes and be done with it.

Removing Mr. Clinton from office will not "undo the election," despite what his supporters say with the persistence of frogs in mating season. In 1996, victorious Democrats cast their votes for two men, Mr. Clinton and Mr. Gore, so that their will should prevail in case of assassination, accident, illness, or high crimes. Despite the guarantee that one of their party will occupy the White House until January 2001, Senate Democrats have already shown that they will be of no use in this matter. Senator Lieberman, the heroic moralist of the early days of the scandal, has spent the last few months greasing the escape hatches for Mr. Clinton.

Senator Moynihan's call for censure brings to mind Murray Kempton's old crack that the Free Katanga Committee of 1962 began its life where most conservative causes end theirs: with the desertion of Everett Dirksen. Moynihan's early criticisms of the president—he said his reported behavior, if true, would represent a "disorder"—have ended where so many of Moynihan's good ideas do: with his own desertion. It looks as if his last important Senate vote will complete the long process of Defining Moynihan Down.

That leaves the job—the thankless job—of doing the right thing to the Senate Republicans. Mr. Clinton's popularity may be sky-high, but senators owe their constituents their judgment—perhaps especially when it is not popular. If Republicans funk the logic of their position now, they will retroactively render it frivolous—an episode of harassment, like former senator Alfonse D'Amato's Whitewater hearings, called off the day Bob Dole lost. If they speak the truth, history will approve their courage, and maybe sooner rather than later. There will be close to two years between any trial and the next election; who knows what Mr. Clinton's record will look like then? But whether judgment comes fast or slow, the time to act is now.

Many impeachment foes in Congress profess to have been consulting the *Federalist Papers*. If they are still reading, they should consider the great speech on power and trust of the *Federalist*'s main author, Alexander Hamilton, at the New York Convention for ratifying the Constitution in June 1788. "Sir," Hamilton said, "when you have divided and nicely balanced the departments of government, when . . . you have rendered your system as perfect as human forms can be, you must place confidence, you must give power." Checks and balances, he was saying, can accomplish only so much. Rulers must have freedom to act. But they must also earn that freedom by inspiring confidence. When they do not, a free people must strip them of their power.

THE IRAQ CRISIS

Not So Smart Bombs

PRESIDENT Clinton said that by bombing Iraq for four nights "we are delivering a powerful message to Saddam," but some messages are verboten. When it was discovered that a sailor had written "Here's a Ramadan present" on one American bomb, a Pentagon spokesman immediately condemned the "thoughtless graffiti mentioning the holy month of Ramadan"; noted that "[r]eligious intolerance is an anathema to Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen"; and added, "The United States deeply respects Islam." Another Clinton first: politically correct bombs.

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by Charlie Allen

First iron with wood's face sets World Distance Record; hits 3 times straighter than a 3-iron.

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An independent test on a hitting machine showed that the club, called the Controller® driving iron, outhit one of the top drivers on the Tour by five yards.

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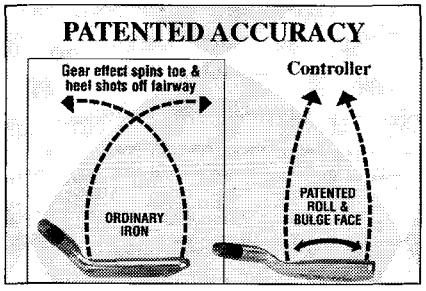
More proof of the club's performance is the World Record shot hit from the fairway by a PGA professional at Barton Creek golf course outside Austin. Using the Controller, he hit a ball so straight it almost bumped into a marker the size of a newspaper *335 yards away*. A club official measured the shot at 339 yards.



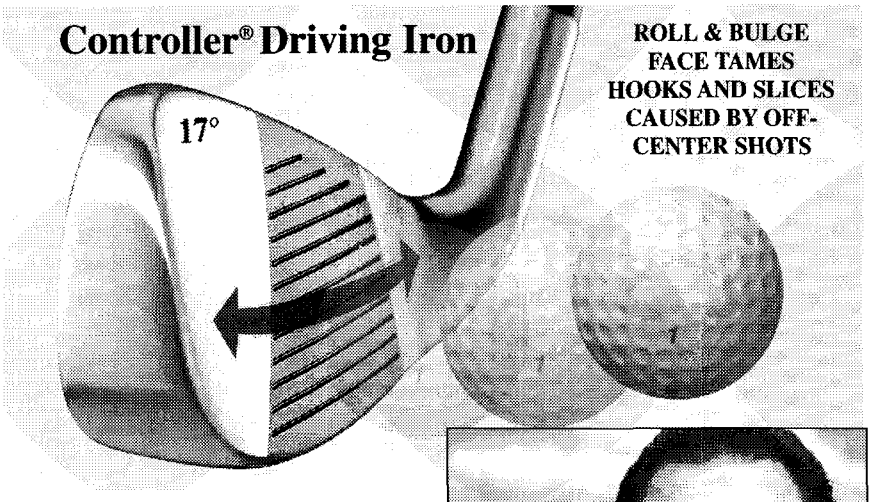
NGC Golf's Controller driving iron is the first iron to use roll and bulge. The design is patented and conforms to U.S.G.A. Rules.

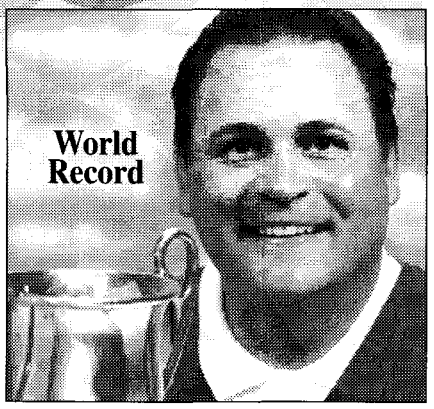
I spoke to one of the Directors of NGC Golf, the club's developer. "This is quite a story. What's making all these good things happen?"

"The club outhits a wood because its head is smaller and 15% heavier. This unique combination gives the club faster clubhead speed and far more clout at impact. It's more accurate than a wood because it is shorter and easier to control."

"Why is it more accurate than an iron?"

"Ah, here's the genius. We took the curve that every wood has on its face– called roll and bulge– and put it on an iron. We are the first company to ever do this and the Controller's design is patented.





Doug Reed, PGA professional and host of the TV show, BETTER GOLF, set a World Record with a 339-yard drive off the grass using a Controller fairway driving iron at Barton Creek Lakeside golf course outside Austin, TX. The shot was hit on a windless day over flat ground and certified by a club official.

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Why not? The bombing appeared to be more a form of therapy for U.S. policymakers than a strategy for dealing with the Iraqi regime. The refusal to bomb during Ramadan reflected American liberal obsessions: Iran, Iraq, Egypt, and Syria have all lustily made war during Ramadan in the last three decades. The decision not to bomb legitimate military targets that were near civilians also reflected liberal squeamishness (a squeamishness that will help other anti-American dictators choose locations for their weapons).

Empty buildings and deserted barracks were thus a large share of the targets hit. Administration officials once again lowered their sights: Their objective now was merely to "degrade Iraq's military capabilities," which the destruction of a single tank would accomplish.

The rationale for the attack was elusive. Clinton cited reports of Iraq's promise-breaking evasion of weapons inspections, but that behavior was nothing new; when former U.N. inspector Scott Ritter said as much just months before, he was pilloried by Clinton cabinet officials and a condescending Sen. Joe Biden (D., Del.). Previous deadlines and ultimata had not led to action, even when circumstances were more favorable. Now the inspections are over, and even sanctions are losing international support. Clinton's policy is in tatters.

As is his credibility. Given the peculiarities of the attack, previous politicized foreign policies (Haiti, Northern Ireland), and Clinton's character, it was inevitable that his motives would be questioned. Almost none of his defenders declared it unthinkable that he would even consider endangering U.S. troops for political gain. Columnist E. J. Dionne Jr. said that Clinton was too smart to adopt a counterproductive tactic; Rep. Lee Hamilton (D., Ind.) said that Clinton's critics would never be able to *prove* the charge.

Clinton himself could only hide behind the credibility of other people—Cohen, the Joint Chiefs, British prime minister Tony Blair. Mostly, Democrats just professed outrage that the question would even be asked. Hence the spectacle of left-wingers who had taken every opportunity to gut the military declaring that impeachment would dishonor our troops—who, as everyone knows, actually despise Clinton.

Clinton's motives, however, are less important than his consequences. Washington seems increasingly to recognize that the Iraqi threat will only grow until Saddam Hussein is overthrown. But the administration's critics may be succumbing to an illusion of their own if they fail to consider options beyond no-fly zones, safe havens, and aid to the opposition. It is quite possible that a major commitment of ground troops will be required—as will a president with the moral authority to send them into battle.

That's Bipartisan!

A House committee so select,
The bomb it's dropping could affect
Both Clinton and the elder Bush,
Has given an unnerving push
Toward secrets purloined by Peking;
Now, with the trial still festering
And wordsmiths fussing with The Speech,
One rolls around the word, Impeach.

—W. H. von Dreele

THE EUROPEAN UNION

Coin of the Realm

With champagne corks popping, cigars being brandished, and an unfortunate Dutch finance minister getting a custard pie in the face, the European Union's new single currency was launched on New Year's Day to general acclaim. On its first day out, the euro more than held its own against a sluggish dollar. European stock markets gained a broad average of 5 percent. And the euro was pronounced a historic success.

The euro's early virility is no surprise. Ever since the governors of the European Central Bank were selected last May and proved to be hard-money men (yes, even the French governor), it was a sure bet that the euro would not enter the world as a weak currency. Indeed, it might be more welcome to Europe's more arthritic economies if it had done so and helped stimulate their export prospects.

For the euro's test will not be its performance in the currency exchanges but its impact on Europe's economies. The ECB now sets a single interest rate for all countries in the euro zone. But a single rate cannot equally suit eleven countries with different labor costs, different savings rates, and different rates of productivity. This problem could be overcome, or at least minimized, if European governments were to follow the U.S. and Britain in deregulating their labor markets, reining back their welfare benefits, making their capital markets more efficient, and cutting marginal tax rates. But that did not happen when mainly conservative governments were striving to adapt their economies to the pre-euro "convergence criteria." Now that social democrats of varying degrees of economic illiteracy hold power in all the major continental countries, it is a pipe dream.

European governments will therefore demand an expansionary monetary policy to reduce unemployment. They will probably win in the end—but not immediately, maybe not for a long while.

And what will happen during that while? The best bet is that European social democrats will cosset their welfare states by using the excuse of cheap Asian imports to raise ever-higher protectionist barriers against "social dumping" (while boasting loudly of their concern for the poor). Over time, the euro will remain "strong" but Europe will stagnate—like Portugal under Salazar.

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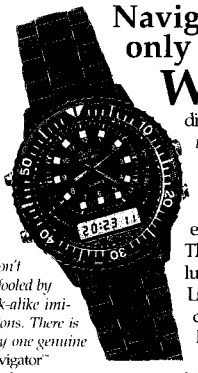

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America is likely to lose in any event. If the euro defies these predictions and succeeds on all fronts, it is likely to stimulate the EU drive to become a superpower in its own right and to challenge American hegemony. And it if fails, the resulting mess is likely to be blamed by disappointed, resentful Euro-elites on poor old Uncle Sam. Happy New Year.

■ NOTES & ASIDES ■

■ **Memo to: WFB**
From: Jack Fowler
Bill: I have a note from Pat Powers, who sailed with us on the NR Post-Election Cruise, spending time with his old friend Stanley Norton. The good news is that Stan Norton hugely enjoyed his third NR cruise; the sad news is that he died on December 6. Mr. Powers reports that Stan Norton boasted of having distributed flyers for Alf Landon in 1936, but mostly of having been a charter subscriber to NATIONAL REVIEW. He asks that we pass on the sad word to all the friends Stan made on our cruises. R.I.P.

■ **Dear Mr. Buckley**: Our 17-year-old son recently surprised and pleased us by producing a perfect 1600 on his SAT.

When the shock wore off, I asked young Joshua (a busy boy, one not given to hours of leisure reading) to what he would attribute his perfect vocabulary score. He replied, "Probably the most important thing I do is read every issue of NATIONAL REVIEW from cover to cover." Josh peppers his conversations with quotes from your magazine, looks up unfamiliar words in your editorials, and pronounces most other reading "boring."

Congratulations, Mr. Buckley. You are not boring.

Etymologically yours,
Peg Strodtbeck
New Palestine, Ind.

Dear Mrs. Strodtbeck: Well, our *heartiest* congratulations to Joshua. He is clearly a winner. We will establish a prize in his honor, the Annual Joshua Award. It will be conferred every year on any NR subscriber who achieves a 1600 SAT score.

Cordially, WFB

■ **Dear Mr. Buckley**: Two longtime readers of yours are locked in a long-time dispute it appears only you may be able to resolve, given your authority in the area concerned.

One of my closest friends is married to a very competitive Scrabble player. Unfortunately, the concept of "friendly competition" is lost shortly after she draws her first set of tiles. She told me how she ruined a friendship over a game. It seems her opponent played "whiter" for big points, prompting her to protest. How could there possibly be a word like "whiter" when white is the absence of color? He found the word in the Scrabble dictionary, and they resumed play, though she refused to drop the matter of the inappropriateness of the word "whiter."

Shortly after the word "whiter," she played "jader." Her opponent challenged, and the word was not found in the Scrabble dictionary. She argued that if "whiter" was a word, surely "jader" was. He asked her to use it in a sentence. "The dress was jader than the last one she tried on." He refused to let her play the word, and in anger she threw the board at him. He stormed out of the room.

He sent her a present a couple of weeks later with a note: "You were right, I was wrong." She opened the wrapping to find a new Scrabble dictionary. Opening the book to "J," she found handwritten in blue ink, "jader: a word commonly used to cheat at Scrabble." The two have rarely spoken since.

In the interest of harmony among conservatives who happen to be avid Scrabble players, I'm asking you to adjudicate:

1. Is "whiter" a word?
2. Is "jader" a word?
3. Do I dare play Scrabble with either person? Should I have a lawyer or a psychiatrist present?

Sincerely,
James M. D. Wigderson
Franklin, Wis.

Dear Mr. Wigderson: You have very combative friends! And they are ingenious in the ways of retaliation. But inasmuch as, in this situation, the buck stops here, herewith my finding:

Yes on whiter. Adj. *White, whiter, whitest.*

No on jader, jade being a mineral, most often greenish in color. In such situations you need to go to the contrivance "jade-like". A lot of nouns can be used as adjectives, but don't let themselves go into the comparative and superlative cases. "His kangaroo posture made him fragile"—okay; but not, "His posture was kangarooer than Jim's."

Cordially, WFB

■ **Dear Mr. Buckley:** Mr. Derbyshire's defense of "data" as a singular noun in his review of Eric Jacobs's *Kingsley Amis: A Biography* strikes me as quite misguided. The analogy with "rice" and "sand" is strained, since neither of these words has a singular referring to the component grain (a rice? and the transition from "sand" to "sands," as in White Sands, is that from a few to several hundred dunes). "Data," on the other hand, has a perfectly good singular—"datum"—which arises often in routine usage . . . or used to, when we still profited from those competent schoolmarms whose influence Mr. Derbyshire seems to bemoan. May I ask how far we are to extend such reasoning, in your opinion? Are we to employ a singular verb with "memoranda" and "addenda," or must we italicize them if we insist upon treating them as plural? (Here, at least, a Clintonesque blunderer might invoke the ancient Greeks rather than admit error, for they *did* use singular verbs with neuter plurals like these; but "data," as Mr. Derbyshire notes, is Latin.) Have we some kind of moral or social obligation, do you think, to dumb down together as Latin becomes, not the grandparent of the English language, but the source of a few scattered fossils requiring italics?

Yours sincerely,
John Harris
Tyler, Tex.

Dear Mr. Harris: I weep with gratitude for your letter, which eloquently gives my own position on the matter. Cordially,

—WFB

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■ THE SCANDAL ■

True Colors

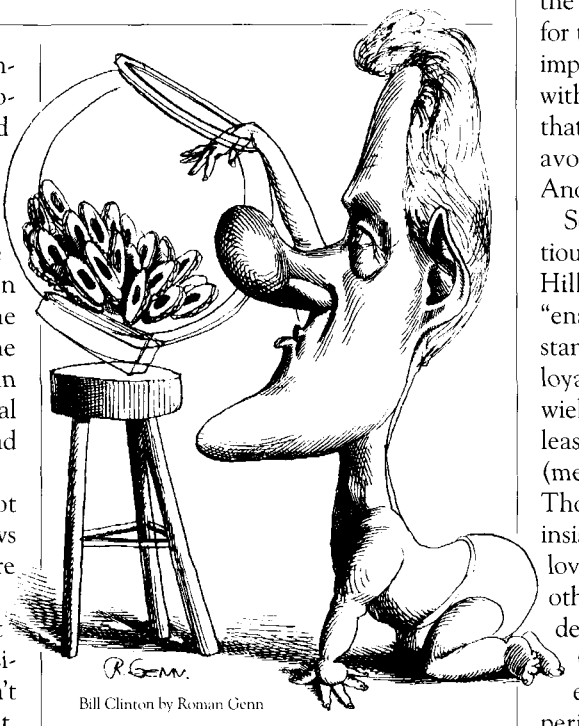
Monicagate is vintage Clinton—only this time he got caught.

CARL M. CANNON

IN 1990, when Bill Clinton was planning his run for president, a Democratic media consultant named Raymond D. Strother asked him how he was planning to handle the question of youthful marijuana use. "I'm thinking of saying I never violated the drug laws of my country," Clinton replied. Strother, seeing through the ruse immediately, gently informed the one-time Rhodes scholar that such an answer wasn't likely to fool the national press. By 1992, of course, Clinton had settled on his "I didn't inhale" line.

Was this a lie? Had he really not inhaled marijuana smoke? No one knows for sure, though several people who were at Oxford with Clinton told presidential biographer David Maraniss that they believed him—thought it was possible that the young Clinton really hadn't known how to smoke. The larger point, however, is that Bill Clinton believed while in college, believed while in Arkansas, and believes today that the truth is something that he can finesse.

Of all the behavior exhibited by the president during the past year, as he micro-managed a little sex scandal into his own impeachment, the decision his critics find most inexplicable is his absolute refusal to concede that he lied. This from a man who arrived in Washington with the sobriquet "Slick Willie," who admitted "inappropriate" sex acts in the Oval Office, who confessed adultery and acknowledged turning the country topsy-turvy through his own lack of discipline. But what he has stubbornly refused to do—despite assurances from some Republicans that he could make it all go away—is admit that he twice took an oath to tell the truth during court proceedings and failed to do so.



Bill Clinton by Roman Genn

On its face, this refusal seems not only self-destructive, but strange. Clinton has been a known dissembler for two decades, and certainly the American public has no illusions about him. In the same polls that show Clinton with Eisenhower-level approval ratings, only 8 percent give him high marks for truth-telling. What's more, the facts that Clinton has grudgingly conceded—quite apart from the DNA evidence on that infamous dress—make it plain that Clinton told falsehoods to Paula Jones's lawyers, to a federal grand jury, to Jim Lehrer and other journalists, and to various U.S. senators. He lied to his cabinet, to his vice president, to his aides, and to his friends (including the much-maligned Harry Thomason). The only person he appears to have confided the truth to, concerning Monica Lewinsky, is Dick Morris.

It was hardly any shock to House members that Clinton's veracity was shaky—not after slippery negotiations in which the president would say one thing to one group and something entirely different to another. This applies not just to Republicans but to the self-same Democrats who railed against Clinton's conduct on the House floor, then trucked down Pennsylvania Avenue to the White House in a show of support for the second president in history to be impeached. Now, as the Senate grapples with a constitutional mess, one question that presents itself is, Was this wreckage avoidable, given Clinton's nature? Another is, Whose fault is it, anyway?

Some like to cast the president's ambitious wife as a primary culprit. They see Hillary Rodham Clinton as the "enabler" who ill served the country by standing by her man, not out of love or loyalty, but out of her own desire to wield power. This explanation strikes at least one professional Clinton-watcher (me) as too pat, and probably unfair. Those who know the First Lady well insist that, whatever her ambitions, she loves the big lug a great deal. Like many other wives, she believed her husband's denials when others did not. Moreover, Clinton's presidency is not threatened by extramarital activity, but by perjury, which Hillary Clinton has no authority to pardon. So the First Lady should not bear the blame. If we are to point to enablers, or co-conspirators, we might as well name the Arkansas political establishment, Clinton's ineffective presidential opponents, the Democratic party, and the media, all of whom let Clinton shade the truth for years without an adequate accounting.

Today, the entire political culture—including the president—is paying the price. Clinton realizes his denials and assurances aren't worth much anymore, no matter how thinly sourced the allegation leveled against him: whether it's that he fathered an out-of-wedlock child in Arkansas or that he bombed Iraq in an attempt to forestall or thwart impeachment. When questioned by reporters on the lingering "Wag the Dog" doubts about his airstrikes, Clinton didn't rely on his own word or that of his secretary

Mr. Cannon, a longtime White House reporter, writes for *National Journal*.

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of state—both of them were compromised by flat denials in the Lewinsky affair. Instead, the president fell back on the assurances made by his defense secretary, a Republican, and by a general on the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Despite these credibility problems, Clinton surely doesn't think of himself as a liar. His fury, when he is accused of lying, is too spontaneous to be faked, and the effort he puts into giving convoluted, nearly technically perfect answers is the trait of a clever lawyer, not a man who takes secret pleasure in devilish fibs. In his January 17 deposition, for example, this man renowned for his memory of people and places answered "I don't remember" 71 times, "I don't know" 62 times, and "I don't believe so" or "I don't think so," etc., another 134 times.

Yet it is also undeniable that Clinton has a long record of exaggeration and prevarication. Presidents are like other politicians, only more so, and they lie for all kinds of reasons: during the heat of a political campaign, because it's expedient; when it's the only way to get Congress to do what they want; when they fear the consequences of admitting they did something wrong (like Richard Nixon, when he insisted that Watergate was a figment of the *Washington Post*'s imagination). They lie most famously for national-security reasons, as Ike did during the U-2 affair. They also lie for the most human of reasons: when they want audiences to like them. Franklin D. Roosevelt was a master of such fibs. Ronald Reagan was another, as when he drew material from the movies, which could be creative—or unnerving.

Bill Clinton tells every kind of lie. He freely invents his own history, as the nation learned in 1992 when he provided ever-shifting accounts of his draft record and employed various half-truths about his relationship with Gennifer Flowers. He also made promises during the campaign that he hadn't the slightest intention of keeping, such as the middle-class tax cut before the Florida primary as a wedge against Paul Tsongas. Shortly after his election, Clinton made public assertions about the budget that he knew to be false, often prefacing them with, "It's time to tell the truth." When he blasted Republicans for not offering specific budget cuts, John Kasich, then the ranking GOP member on the House Budget Committee, whipped out a copy of a personal letter from Clinton thanking him for identifying $430 billion worth of such cuts. In time, Clinton would vow that American troops would be in Bosnia for only a year—even though the military brass was telling him that this was unrealistic. And he would, of course, insist, "I did not have sexual relations with that woman, Miss Lewinsky."

Bill Clinton tells every kind of lie. He freely invents his own history.

The most common of Clinton's falsehoods is the self-serving historical claim: He knows more about agriculture than anyone who ever occupied the White House (including, presumably, Washington, Jefferson, and Carter); no one has championed the First Amendment the way he has; no one has created more jobs or eliminated more government waste. Etc. In real life, a person who talked this way would be considered a braggart and a bore. But Clinton's outsized sense of entitlement comes through the loudest when his fabrications are at the expense of others. This trait is often attributed to Clinton's rebellious and spoiled generation, but with him it goes deeper. The notion that he is special—and thus can do no wrong—was nurtured in his family and, indeed, through his entire state. In that respect, he seems less like his baby-boomer peers than the pampered professional athletes of the 1990s, whose talent prompts society to overlook not only boorish but criminal behavior.

Ray Strother has another theory, and it's not a cheery one, because it suggests that Clinton may be the first in a long line. Strother suspects that the most important thing to know about Clinton is not that he is the first post-WWII-generation president but that he is the first focus-group president—the first to make it all the way to the Oval Office on the building blocks of polls, not his own achievements or beliefs.

Bill Clinton takes polls to decide where his family will vacation, what surname his wife will use, whether he will end the federal welfare entitlement, and how to phrase his apologies. Is it any wonder that truth sometimes gets lost in the shuffle? During the 1996 campaign, Clinton's advisers turned up evidence that voters didn't know about Bob Dole's war record—and, when they discovered it, were inclined to admire it. Clinton's response? To instruct every warm-up speaker in every little town he campaigned in to emphasize Clinton's "courage" in taking such safe (and poll-tested) stances as his opposition to the tobacco companies and to the National Rifle Association. Where's the outrage? the challenger would ask, as Clinton got away with this and so much more. But Dole never inspired that outrage.

Similarly, in 1992, George Bush had a chance to knock Clinton out, in the third presidential debate. Helen Thomas of UPI asked Clinton, "If you had it to do over again, would you put on the nation's

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CLINTON: I WON'T RESIGN

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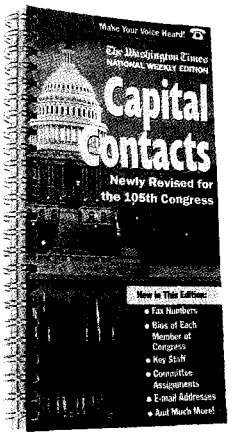

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uniform?" Responded Clinton, "If I had it to do over again, I might answer the questions a little better. You know, I've been in public life a long time, and no one had ever questioned my role."

Now, this was a real whopper, but what would have happened if Bush had turned to Clinton and said something like the following? "Governor, even though I left college voluntarily during World War II to enlist in the Navy, I haven't made an issue of your avoidance of military service in Vietnam. But now, sir, you've gone too far. You've been asked about the lies you've told relating to your draft record—and you've lied again, right up here on this stage. This has been an issue in Arkansas for years. Way back in 1978, an opponent of yours held a press conference to denounce you as a draft dodger. I'm not saying that the commander-in-chief has to be a veteran. But he's got to be someone whom the men and women in uniform know will tell the truth, especially about military service."

Bush said nothing, however, and Clinton won the election handily.

But in 1998, when Clinton should have been enjoying the victory-lap years of his two-term presidency, something did happen. The irritant that was the Paula Jones litigation took a nightmarish twist for him, putting him on a collision course with Monica Lewinsky, Linda Tripp, Kenneth Starr, and a gentle pit bull named Henry Hyde. It is tempting to see Biblical retribution in all this, or at least the elements (particularly hubris) of a Greek tragedy. Remember this: Paula Jones wanted $25,000 and a private apology in lieu of filing her suit. She later backed out of a settlement agreement when Clinton, his lawyers, and his aides gave her the high hat. In the end, Clinton's luck ran out.

"There is something inevitable about it," says veteran Arkansas newspaperman Paul Greenberg, the man who coined the "Slick Willie" moniker some 18 years ago while writing about Clinton. "But he didn't see it. His whole career had taught him that he could get away with this stuff—in fact, that this was the secret to his success. But he left all these loose ends around, loose ends of truth, like rollerskates in the living room. And one of them was going to trip him." **NR**

■ THE SCANDAL II ■

Postmodern Times

The Democrats deny the very concept of truth.

HADLEY ARKES

It may have been, altogether, a ragged, unsettling year since the Advent of Monica, yet nothing has been unsettled, or altered, in the character of Bill Clinton. He has remained, remarkably, the same. It is his defenders who have had to perform moral surgery on themselves. After watching the performance of the Democrats, and their allies, in the Judiciary Committee, we may even now say that the defense of Clinton has been far worse than his crimes. His very dissembling was a mark at least of his awareness that he had done something that the public—even in these times—was apt to regard as wrong. And while he summoned his usual fortitude in looking us in the eye and lying, he still presupposed that there was a truth to be covered up. In contrast, the Democrats in Congress have gone positively "postmodern" in their willingness to deny that there are any "foundations" or truths behind our judgments, that there are any objective standards that would allow us to measure either straight lines or straight stories.

What else are we to make of the willingness of Maxine Waters and other Democrats to emit, at regular intervals, the cry of "unsubstantiated charges"? Or the curious persistence of Rep. Mel Watt in asking Ken Starr just how he could accept the "credibility" of Monica Lewinsky when she had professed, so openly, that she had been reared by her mother on a regime of lying. Had it simply slipped their minds that there was, after all, a dress, with stains of semen, and a test of DNA so compelling that it could finally elicit an admission even from the most consummate liar in the land? What became evident was that this operating rule had settled among defenders of the president: The most documented facts, and the most incontrovertible "evidence," can be waved aside as though they did not exist, or did not count, if one simply insists, without surcease, that there are only "charges," "unsubstantiated"—that everything is arguable, everything a matter of perception and opinion—and that these themes, repeated day in and day out, will be enough to persuade about a third of the public. Nothing is apparently as credible as a falsehood grown venerable with repetition.

The lie was acted out on a larger stage during the vote on impeachment, when the Democrats put up their proposal for "censure." In a parade of speakers, they would characterize the acts of their president as "reprehensible," as "disgracing" the office of presidency. And yet, after the vote was over, they would rush to his side and envelop him with applause as though he had been a victim, a sufferer, rather than the wrongdoer. This false posture carries over now into the Senate, and it colors instantly as a lie the earnest declamations offered by the Democrats: They insist that they regard the president's acts as deeply wrong, and yet not of a sufficient weight to justify his removal from office. If we would only hold back from that immoderate course, they assure us, they would be willing to arrange a censure that is truly serious.

What brands their posture a lie is the fact that they cannot quite get around that elementary logic expressed by John Stuart Mill, who should stand after all as a patron saint among the liberals: "We call any conduct wrong," wrote Mill, "or employ, instead, some other term of dislike or disparagement, according as we think that the person ought, or ought not, to be punished for it." Sen. Lieberman has thundered his moral condemnation, in the style of a Biblical prophet, but he has stopped short of drawing the conclusion by calling for resignation or supplying a punishment.

What about the move to levy fines as a punishment, joined with some finding of

Mr. Arkes, an NR contributing editor, is Ney Professor of Jurisprudence at Amherst College.

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fault that the president admits and signs? In fiddling with these schemes, the Democrats have been joined by such Republican luminaries as Bob Dole and President Ford. With Dole and Ford, there seems to be a conservative temper at work in avoiding any wrenching changes that may unsettle our institutions. And yet, Dole and Ford join the Democrats in their willingness to treat the Constitution itself with the most serene disregard. In fact, they seem to have lost entirely the understanding taught by the Founders, that the first obligation of statesmen in the Republic is to do nothing, in their measures, that injures the Constitution, or the "basic law," the law that tells us how we have laws.

Every attempt to avoid the trauma of impeachment turns out to create something worse.

And that basic law has incorporated a principle running to the core of "lawfulness" in the aversion to bills of attainder: It is simply not part of the business of Congress, as a legislature, to mete out punishments to persons by name, even if their names happen to be Nixon or Clinton. As Felix Frankfurter once observed, the Constitution meant to put legislatures out of the business of acting as courts or as administrators of the law. The discipline of legislating involves the task of defining, in impersonal terms, the nature of a wrong and the class of wrongdoers. That discipline is sharpened by the awareness, on the part of legislators, that their legislation will be put in hands other than their own to administer—perhaps unfriendly hands—and that recognition offers a powerful incentive to be cautious in what they legislate.

But in a grand gesture, former President Carter suggests that censure may be accompanied by an assurance, on the part of Congress, that there will be no prosecution if Clinton admits his perjury. Carter seems to have fallen into the same constitutional fallacy: It is precisely because Congress does not administer the law to persons, in the style of courts or agencies, that it does not direct prosecutions—or call them off.

By now, the warning bells and buzzers should be sounding: Every attempt to be clever, every attempt to avoid the trauma of impeachment and the rigors of the Constitution, turns out to create something worse, which disfigure the Constitution. Impeachment, after all, is in the Constitution, and it was brought back, vividly, 25 years ago. Why, then, are politicians suddenly so traumatized by the Constitution that they are willing to fly to schemes to circumvent it , even if they subvert the principles of lawfulness?

The most sensible advice for the Senate is to play it straight: to focus on the evidence so carefully assembled and come to a judgment. But if the Senate backs away from removing Clinton, it will sense the need to make a serious move toward a real punishment, for if the votes are wanting for conviction, Clinton is likely to claim vindication and emerge from this sorry business as a martyred victim.

Charles Schumer, Jerrold Nadler, and Barney Frank by Roman Genn

At that moment, if the Democrats are serious, they may be drawn to measures that may be voted by the Congress even without the president's signature. Most notably, the Congress could apply to Clinton the kind of policy brought forth in 1974 in relation to Richard Nixon: He could lose control of all of his presidential papers and tapes, from the first moments of his presidency to his last. The control can be transferred to the General Services Administration, and Clinton can then have the burden of petitioning to get access to his own papers. In the meantime, the destruction of any of those papers would count as a felony, for those papers, after all, could be needed in trials.

Some of us continue to think that such an arrangement, too, would constitute a bill of attainder, but Justice Brennan led the Supreme Court in declaring that in the case of Nixon it did not. Once again, the law invented for Nixon would find its application to Clinton. And for Clinton to be placed on the same plane as Nixon would be felt, by all Democrats, as a reproach most severe. Congress could also decide on its own not to invite Clinton into the House for any more speeches on the State of the Union, and that move, combined with the other, would convey, unmistakably, a presidency put under the pall of condemnation.

For the Democrats, it has seemed throughout far better to install Al Gore, to run as an incumbent, rather than to have a wounded Clinton linger. But beyond all the calculations, there remains a primitive moral awareness: that it is still not good for the party to have its president discredited and chased from office. That same passion is likely to make the party just as unwilling to vote for any of those measures that carries the sting of punishment. But if the Democrats back away, they would at least dissolve the pretense that has engulfed them over the past year. For they would make it clear now that, if they stop short of punishment once again, it is because they have not thought, in their heart of hearts, that Clinton has ever done anything here truly "wrong." **NR**

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■ THE SCANDAL III ■

Throwback

At least one Democrat in Washington is appalled by Clinton.

KATE O'BEIRNE

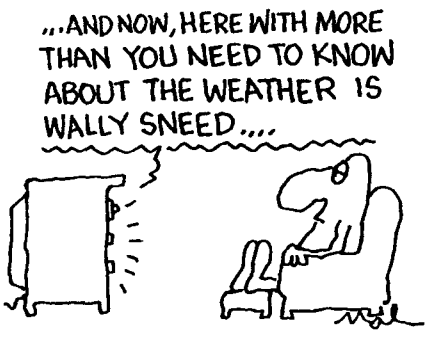
DAVID Schippers, chief counsel to Henry Hyde's Judiciary Committee, was at home in Chicago when the Starr report was delivered to Capitol Hill. It seemed from media reports that the referral was "just sex," so he told friends he expected to be home for good in a couple of weeks. "I was fully prepared to review it and go back to Henry and say, 'It's over,'" he recalls. Within a month, though, the veteran Democratic lawyer (who, by the way, voted for Bill Clinton twice) was outlining 15 possible criminal counts against the president. As he helps prepare the House managers to make their case before a jury of senators, he explains, "What changed my mind was the evidence." If enough of his fellow Democrats in the Senate agree with him that "the office of the presidency is more important than the man," they, too, could be persuaded by the very facts Schippers found he couldn't ignore.

Schippers readily admits to being "an anachronism, a throwback." He is an old-style, Truman Democrat, holding accountable the first New Democrat to occupy the White House. He finds the Clinton machine's treatment of its adversaries "terrifying, from a moral standpoint." He is particularly offended in behalf of the president's female accusers, who have been, he says, "trashed." "I have five daughters, and there was a time people would be out horsewhipping over that."

Still, he has gentle things to say about his legal counterparts: White House counsel Charles Ruff is "a very decent man," and Schippers hopes to have "made a friend" in Abbe Lowell, the Judiciary Committee's minority counsel. Some Democrats, he says, had "reasonable arguments, like whether the offenses were impeachable. But to say that Ken Starr is a bad guy, or that Monica Lewinsky was not properly treated, is pettifogging and beneath legitimate political discourse." A "highlight" of his time in Washington? It occurred after Starr's testimony, as Schippers was leaving the building. A woman approached him and asked whether he was Mr. Schippers. "I said that I was, and she said, 'I'm Mrs. Starr, and I want to say thank you.'"

"Growing up in Chicago," says Schippers, "there were three things paramount in my life: the White Sox, the Church, and the Democratic party—and not necessarily in that order." His cousin is chairman of the Cook County Democratic party—a position not far from Pope—and it is to that party that he remains loyal. "I'm still a Democrat here in Chicago," he says, "but I'm discouraged about Democrats out there because they didn't seem to care." He speaks of a time when "Democrats and Republicans would rise up against crooked judges, or whoever. The question of party took a backseat to honor and decency."

How did Schippers rise to national prominence? In the fall of '97, he spoke with Hyde, a fellow Knight of the Holy Sepulcher whom he had known for 25 years, about coming to Washington to manage oversight of the Justice Department. Then "the Monica thing hit." By the time he arrived on the Hill, talk of impeachment was in the air. Schippers doubted that Clinton had done anything impeachable. "I always thought the guy had a problem with sexual aberrations, but I didn't think his problems rose to anywhere near an impeachable offense." Even so,



Schippers, along with Hyde, realized he might have to review charges that would lead to impeachment. "We would say, 'If, God forbid,'—and we would always add, 'God forbid'—'Starr issues his report,' I would have to be ready to change hats"—from routine oversight responsibilities to impeachment.

Schippers believes that, despite extensive news coverage, Starr's evidence is poorly understood. "I think that 99 percent of the media haven't read all the evidence," he says. As far as he's concerned, the public can be forgiven for not appreciating the weight or detail of the evidence: "I don't blame the public. They were saturated with the sex." But he laughingly recalls that sex was apparently the sole interest of one Judiciary Democrat. "A female Democratic member came in [to the evidence room] early on and said, 'I want to hear the phone-sex tapes.' When we told her there weren't any, she said, 'Then why am I wasting my time?'"

It was the less salacious evidence that Schippers urged members to review. "I wanted the people in the House, both Republicans and Democrats, to become interested, to come over and look at the evidence and ask questions. I wanted them to *focus*." He reports with satisfaction that, prior to the vote on impeachment by the full House, members did visit the evidence room in small groups to see specific pieces of evidence and question Schippers and his staff.

The old prosecutor refutes the president's defenders who maintain that Starr's perjury-and-obstruction case wouldn't be prosecuted except in a political trial on Capitol Hill. "I've prosecuted cases that were less compelling than this," he avers. And "I've had witnesses lie before a grand jury who were prosecuted within the week." Neither is he much concerned about the partisan nature of the impeachment vote. "How come it's partisan when Republicans vote in a bloc," he asks, "but not when Democrats vote in a bloc?" He points out that only Republicans broke party ranks in the Judiciary Committee, when George Gekas amended Article Four and Lindsey Graham opposed Article Two.

What's more, he's bothered that "partisan" has become so dirty a word. "When the Framers set the stage, if the

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vote was partisan, so be it." It "would be great," he continues, "if the vote had been bipartisan, but that wouldn't have lent it any more legitimacy."

A newcomer to Washington politics, but fully aware of the city's environment, Schippers relates his most surprising experience. After the Republicans' poor showing in the midterm elections, he feared that the impeachment inquiry would screech to a halt. But when committee Republicans next met, they told him they were going to move forward, regardless. He was amazed that Republicans were determined to press on "in the face of the clobbering at the ballot box, the Speaker's resigning, and talk that chances for 2000 were down

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'We are working for the most courageous people I've ever met, who are determined to do their duty.'

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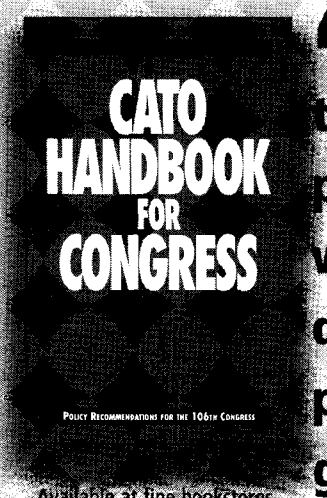
the toilet." Says Schippers, "I went back to my group [of prosecutors] and told them, 'We are working for the most courageous people I've ever met, who are determined to do their duty, and, by God, we're going to do it with them.'" He adds, "The courage of those members is so encouraging when you think of the future of the country. I think that history will be kind to the House Committee, the Republican side"—which displayed "raw courage."

Schippers hopes that senators asked to sit in judgment of the case will be equally courageous. "The senators will take an oath, will raise their hands to God, and I'm just stupid enough to believe there will be a full and fair trial." Unconcerned about politics—he didn't even know the Republican–Democratic numerical breakdown in the Senate—Schippers is committed to the legal process. "I don't care if there is acquittal or conviction," he says, "as long as equal justice is done." He believes a complete trial should be held if only so that the president will get his day in court. "The man has been impeached, and he has the right to defend himself."

A throwback indeed. **NR**



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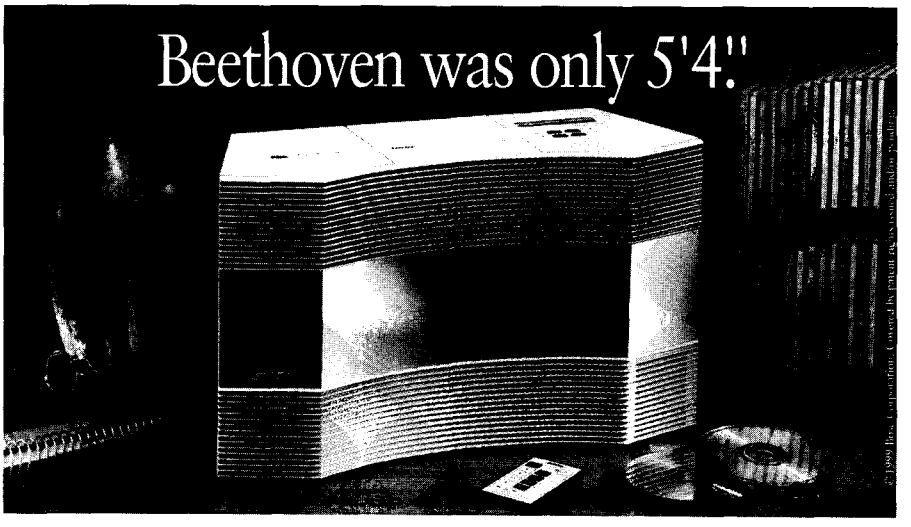

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■ THE SCANDAL IV ■

Celebrity Squares

Hollywood swoons for Clinton.

JOHN J. MILLER

CHANCES are, President Clinton didn't log on to MTV's webpage the day after he delivered his Ejaculation Proclamation last August. If he had, he would have found a supportive statement from a rap star to lift his spirits: "They should leave the man alone. He's doing a good job running the country and there's nothing wrong with him having a little fun." The performer's stage name, though, might have given Clinton pause—Ol' Dirty Bastard.

Perhaps it takes one to love one. While Betty Friedan was running around Capitol Hill blaming impeachment on a "bunch of dirty old white men," an array of rappers was joining Ol' Dirty Bastard (the one from MTV) in defense of their leader. "I think he's been a great president," said Fat Joe. "It ain't his fault that he's a playa." Added the inexplicably named Noreaga, "Clinton's the best president ever. . . . I believe Clinton bent the rules the way he's supposed to. Your wife can't [deliver a Lewinsky] while you're on the job, 'cause that's your wife, ya smell me?"

America's celebrity culture has leapt to Clinton's side. Of course, he has always enjoyed strong support from the Hollywood Left (which is to say, really, Hollywood). Donors to his legal-defense fund include Michael Douglas, Tom Hanks, Barbra Streisand, Steven Spielberg, and Ron Howard, along with super-executives like David Geffen and Jeffrey Katzenburg. In December, Robert De Niro worked the phones to lobby House members against impeachment. Ted Danson, Norman Lear, and Jack Nicholson appeared with Streisand at an anti-impeachment rally in West Hollywood, described by the *Washington Post* as "sparsely attended." Perhaps the crowd was light because few cared to hear Streisand deliver a lecture on Sen. Edmund Ross, the Kansas Republican who cast the deciding vote not to convict Andrew Johnson in 1868. "It is *he* who is remembered by history, not those who voted for impeachment," explained Streisand—as if she had even heard of the guy the week before. Roger Clinton also attended, but he isn't really a star; he just acts like one.

The president's groupies will occasionally bow to the ritualism that their man behaved "inappropriately," but for the most part they act as though Clinton had checked in to the Betty Ford Clinic and needed their tender-loving support more than anything else. Gosh, he even made an emotional confession on television! Isn't the judging supposed to end now?

Well, it hasn't. So Clinton's celebrities have taken a page from the White House playbook: They're attacking the attackers. The *New York Post* reported that Newt Gingrich lookalike Phil Donahue exploded with rage at a Four Seasons party, screaming about how he hated the Republicans. His wife, Marlo Thomas, scampered behind him, explaining apologetically that some of Phil's best friends are in the GOP. "I don't know why he's saying that," she said. "He doesn't really hate all Republicans." (She might have been thinking, "There's Chris Shays.")

Alec Baldwin by Roman Genn

Other stars have predictably zeroed in on the man they consider the focus of evil in the modern world: "Ken Starr is hung up sexually," singer Lucinda Williams opined to *Rolling Stone*. Haim Saban, head of the Fox Family Channel, told the *Washington Post* that "Ken Starr should be tried for treason." TV producer Marshall Herskovitz offered the *New York Times* an explanation of why Hollywood is so flustered about impeachment: "Clinton is a set of contradictions, and most of those contradictions work quite well within the moral structure of Hollywood. Those people whose sexual morality accepts the possibility of complexity and ambivalence in a marital relationship have not judged Clinton as badly as those who see marriage as a monolithic, simple entity. And in Hollywood, marriage is often not seen as a monolithic, simple entity."

Then again, monolithic, simple entities can be stubborn things—and they can provoke fighting words. Shortly after Clinton's grand-jury testimony in August, Chris Rock, who normally works as a comedian, went ballistic on the *Today* show. "Clinton, give me a call," shouted Rock in his high-pitched voice. "I will whup Starr's a**. If he would pardon me, if President Clinton would pardon me, I would whup Starr's a** right now. I will get a crew from Brooklyn, and we will stomp him."

Paul Newman, for his part, appeared on the *Oprah Winfrey Show* in early December, ostensibly to discuss cooking. Yet more than food was on his mind. At one point, his recipe for cheese puffs called on him to whip his ingredients. He then started acting like one of the witches in *Macbeth*: "And this is for Newt Gingrich! And that's for Kenneth Starr! And that's for Dick Armey!" Oprah, to her credit, ignored him, but a few minutes later Newman returned to his odd brand of punditry. This time, he was skewering chicken. Again he exclaimed, "This is for Gingrich! This is for Ken Starr!" Oprah at last responded, "Oh, gosh, have you been watching those hearings at all?" Newman replied that he had not, saying, "It's a waste of time."

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It is another actor, Alec Baldwin, who takes the prize for celebrity outrage in Clinton's behalf. Appearing on NBC's *Late Night* in mid-December, Baldwin (who played a jury-tamperer in a movie called *The Juror*) was asked to comment on the impeachment proceedings. "I am thinking to myself, in other countries they are laughing at us 24 hours a day," he said, "and I'm thinking to myself, if we were in other countries, we would all right now, all of us together [shouting now], all of us together would go down to Washington and we would stone Henry Hyde to death! We would stone him to death!" The crowd then applauded. "Wait! Shut up! Shut up! No, shut up!" continued Baldwin. "I'm not finished. We would stone Hyde to death, and we would go to their homes and we'd kill their wives and their children! We would kill their families!" Now he was standing, screaming. "What is happening to this country? What is happening?"

When *Chicago Tribune* columnist John Kass asked Baldwin's flack whether it was appropriate to incite mob violence against political figures on national television, she demanded that all who had raised their eyebrows "lighten up." Even so, Baldwin sent an apology to Hyde "for any comments" that may have offended him or his family. He said the segment was meant to parody "the kind of hate-mongering, crowd-baiting rhetoric that seems to prevail on television these days." NBC states that it will never air the episode again and refuses to provide videotapes of it. The Media Research Center, however, has posted Baldwin's two-minute segment on its website (found at www.mrc.org).

Hours after he was impeached on December 19, President Clinton appeared on the South Lawn of the White House with a special plea. "We must stop the politics of personal destruction," he said. So maybe he could urge his Hollywood pals to cease threatening his political opponents. Then again, they may not listen. Said shock-rocker Marilyn Manson to *Rolling Stone* in November, "I think he's been doing a good job for the country." Yet moments later, he added, "Actually, I don't really know if he's been doing a good job as president, because—to be honest with you—I haven't even been paying attention." **NR**

■ THE HILL ■

House Broken

The revolutionary fire is gone. But the House Republicans may be smarter and more realistic.

RICHARD LOWRY

PRESIDING over the House of Representatives on the day Republicans took up the impeachment of President Clinton was Ray LaHood, an Illinois Republican who loves parliamentary procedure and worked for years for the former Republican minority leader, Bob Michel. Beneath him that morning, Bob Livingston would make his snap resignation, paving the way to the speakership for Dennis Hastert, another Illinois Republican and Michel protégé. So, the most dramatic day of the Republican majority had an unexpected subtext—Bob Michel's revenge.

Michel serenely presided over what seemed at the time a permanent Republican minority. It was Newt Gingrich who pushed Michel aside and installed a politics of issues (as embodied in the Contract with America) and anti-congressional agitation (the pay-raise fight, the House-bank scandal, the advocacy of term limits). When Republicans won a majority in 1994, the whiff of agitation never quite left them, and a series of crises—the shutdowns, the flood-relief fiasco, the attempted coup—seemed designed to convince the public they couldn't run the House.

Now, their majority, diminished by the past two elections, is on a trend toward oblivion. Minority leader Dick Gephardt clearly smells a Democratic takeover in 2000, and House Republicans have good reason to fear. On the model of Bill Clinton in 1992, when Democrats won the White House but lost congressional seats, an outsider Republican presidential nominee (George W. Bush, Steve Forbes) could decide to run against his own congressional party. "Our nominee," says a GOP strategist, "could run against the mess in Washington—the problem is, we're the mess." House Republicans consider it an imperative to become less messy; smooth management is now good politics.

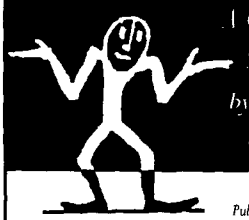
Newt Gingrich was not capable of it. His knowledge of management theory far outpaced his ability to run the House. In Gingrich, Republicans had a Speaker who was a college professor and wanted to be a political philosopher, zoo keeper, or novelist, depending on the day. In Hastert, they have a Speaker who was a wrestling coach and is happy to act like one, not with an eclectic brilliance, but a patient attention to fundamentals.

Republicans hope to find the answer to their woes in merely running the House, in legislating. "The reason for [the GOP's lack of a message] is not getting your work done," says majority whip Tom DeLay. "If you look back at the suc-

"This book has all the brilliance, novel and unanticipated connections among ideas, thoughtfulness, and stylistic grace and daring that one always associates with the work of Mary Douglas."

—Neil Smelser, author of *The Social Edges of Psychoanalysis*

missing persons



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cessful Democratic Congresses, the Democrats always got their work done. They got the bills done. Even when they passed bills they knew the president would veto, that was a message in itself. It has been very difficult to convince the leadership that the most important part of driving a message is using the floor of the House as a place to debate and drive that message, and passing bills is the best way to drive a message."

Tom DeLay's job is to court and deliver votes, so his focus has to be practical.

This was already the thinking when Livingston was the Speaker-presumptive, but his early moves didn't inspire confidence that he could pull it off. "He didn't understand the raw politics involved," says one leadership aide, citing, among other things, Livingston's reckless belief that his skeletons would go unnoticed while every other closet in Washington was getting x-rayed. Some of his initial leadership meetings included up to 60 people, a formula for chaotic indecisiveness, and he pulled his deputies—Rep. Marge Roukema (N.J.), Rep. Mike Forbes (N.Y.), and others—from the ranks of the conference's undistinguished moderates. "The vultures," is how some leadership aides referred to these outsiders eager finally to have a chance to be in.

So, Livingston's resignation didn't dismay House insiders for long. Hastert, a mild-mannered conservative who was a sure thing for Speaker almost immediately, had a number of factors working in his favor. One was, simply, fatigue. Members couldn't stand the idea of another drawn-out leadership fight. "Members are exhausted," says one Hill veteran. "You can see it in their faces." From his work on issues like health care and census sampling, Hastert had earned a reputation for substantive policy work and consensus building. "Any of the tough issues the leadership needed done, we always handed it to Dennis Hastert," says DeLay. And, finally, in Tom DeLay, he had a powerful ally.

In the wake of the botched coup in July 1997, DeLay's leadership job seemed in jeopardy. But he has survived to become arguably the most powerful House Republican—a tribute to his straightforwardness and his sheer skill at retail internal House politics. DeLay immediately confessed his culpability in the anti-Gingrich plot, winning points for candor and securing his support among conservative Gingrich skeptics. Since then, his whip operation has provided the base for a steady expansion of his influence, even as a power vacuum developed in the post-Gingrich House.

DeLay is natural powerbroker in a House grown more mindful of its institutional obligations. His job is to court and deliver votes, which means that his focus always has to be practical, on what members are thinking and what they want. "It's like a special police force out there," one observer says of DeLay's whip team. "They pick up everything and report it back to DeLay." He caters to the members' needs with everything from barbeque buffets and soda in his office to golf outings to legislative favors. Hastert was DeLay's chief deputy in the whip operation, continuing a relationship that began in 1994, when DeLay asked Hastert to run his race for the whip post against the Gingrich-favored Rep. Bob Walker of Pennsylvania.

Tom DeLay and Bill Clinton by Roman Genn

Hastert's ascension increases the sense of DeLay's ubiquitousness. Former DeLay aides are now peppered throughout key staff positions in the House, and DeLay has recently played a role in the victories of three of the top new leaders (Hastert, J. C. Watts as conference chairman, and Tom Davis at the National Republican Campaign Committee). He has unquestionably emerged triumphant in the sometimes rancorous competition between himself, former conference chairman John Boehner, and majority leader Dick Armey. But Armey too gains from Hastert's speakership. Livingston would have tried to squeeze Armey's influence, while Hastert and Armey are friendly. In December, Hastert honored—despite pressure from colleagues—a pledge to Armey that he wouldn't run against him for majority leader.

All of this makes for a leadership team more cohesive than any since 1994. What will the newly cohesive leadership do? With Republicans holding only a five-vote majority, and the balance of power in the hands of 20–30 difficult-to-control moderates, it's not entirely clear. "DeLay is the most powerful man in the House," one observer notes wryly, "besides Chris Shays." The first order of business will be getting appropriations bills passed on time, the fundamental constitutional business of the House. Then, it gets murkier. Hastert may have to push through a health-care bill preemptively to head off something worse from the Democrats. There will also likely be attempts to pass tax relief, education reform, a bipartisan Social Security fix, and measures to boost defense. If these don't pass, they will be at least the outline of an agenda.

There is no doubt now that the heroic phase of the Republican majority is over. But it may turn out that the House GOP's more scaled-back ambitions suits it, as it attempts to play within its game in a way it hasn't in four years, holding on until a new party spokesman emerges from the presidential race. And it needn't lack spunk. "I haven't lost any of my fire," DeLay avows, whose successful effort to beat back censure was one in a series of aggressive legislative gambits. A major Republican mistake over the last

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two years? Lacking "the will to fight," DeLay says. How has the GOP beat back initiatives like campaign-finance reform? "You stand up and fight, and you don't fight alone."

The fights now aren't just a matter of principle, but of survival—as the full-blown return of the Bob Michel minority looms discomfitingly near. **NR**

■ **ABROAD** ■

Chinese Tremors

A crackdown demonstrates the instability of the regime.

ARTHUR WALDRON

AMID China's "Christmas crackdown" on dissent, two small news items may indicate just how worried about the coming year is the regime in Beijing. First, the prime minister warned workers building the immense Three Gorges dam on the Yangtze River that they must avoid "any carelessness or negligence." Second, the regime issued an edict declaring that *earthquake forecasts* were to be classified top secret.

Trivial as these may appear compared with the brutal sentences that sent four top democracy leaders—Xu Wenli, Qin Yongmin, Wang Youcai, and Zhang Shanguang—to the Gulag, the two developments betray the fear now infecting China's rulers. The high dam could well turn into a Chinese Chernobyl (and who familiar with quality control in Communist states doubts that it could?). It is the pet project of former prime minister Li Peng and reeks of the triumphalism characteristic of the Soviet Union (where Li was trained). Imposed by fiat over wide protest, the dam's construction is forcing millions of people to relocate. Even if all goes as planned, the waters will flood ancient sites and ravage the ecosystem. Outright failure, though, would cost millions of lives.

Disaster at Three Gorges would be especially serious in light of Chinese culture, which from the days of the legendary emperor Yu has reckoned the ability to "control the waters"—*zhishui*—to be the touchstone of sound rule. A sensitivity about earthquakes shares this association, too: Since ancient times, a character denoting them—*beng*—has also referred to the collapse of dynasties. And that possibility—the end of 50 years of the Communist hold—is what frightens Beijing.

That said, China's economy has performed reasonably well. President Jiang Zemin has been a conspicuous presence on the world stage. Foreign leaders have tied themselves in knots to avoid criticizing him or his government. The number of his well-equipped internal-security forces is approaching 4 million, and that does not include the People's Liberation Army.

Yet Jiang and his comrades have ample reason to fear a tumble. Recall how they came to power: Ten years ago, as the blood was still being mopped up in central Beijing, the (relatively) liberal prime minister, Zhao Ziyang, who had opposed the use of force, was packed off to house arrest by Deng Xiaoping—and Jiang and his men were installed. The new leadership then used three tools to stabilize China and restore its international image, all while avoiding meaningful political change. Skilled diplomacy brought in foreign money to fuel economic growth; foreign political support was brilliantly courted and secured, to compensate for lack of legitimacy at home; and limited repression was applied to those dissidents uncowed by the Tiananmen massacre.

For almost a decade, these tools were effective; but no longer. The once-booming coastal economy is slowing, even as the government spends massively. Foreign markets are saturated with Chinese goods, and foreign investment is on the decline. Selective repression has failed to do the job, too—which is why the leadership is carrying out the current, particularly crude crackdown. But full-blooded totalitarian repression was standard in China for 30 years under Mao, who was widely revered. That did not "work." Can anyone believe that comparatively halfhearted repression imposed by current leaders (who are not revered) will "work" now? Certainly they do not, which is why they are running scared.

For all their hard-line talk, the leaders are the weakest since 1949 and are accepted by the party only so long as they do not interfere too much with other party officials—as they are now starting to do with their crackdown. Jiang is attempting to tighten central

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control on cities and provinces, limiting information flow, and attacking party and military self-enrichment through arrests and executions of "corrupt" cadres.

Perhaps, like Gorbachev, Jiang imagines that corruption can somehow be stripped away to reveal the noble party beneath; both men, after all, were formed in the Fifties, when Communism could still be thought to stand for something and to work. But, as Gorbachev discovered, corruption was *all* that held the party together, and to attack it was to unleash a host of uncontrollable competing interests. Much the same thing is poised to happen in China.

Perhaps Jiang imagines that corruption can somehow be stripped away to reveal the noble party beneath.

So, far from stabilizing China, the 1998 crackdown may signal still more trouble. Other party leaders will try to keep Jiang from growing too strong, and he does not have to look far for rivals. To his left are Li Peng and others who favor a more orthodox Communist line—with themselves in command. On the more liberal side, the unrepentant Zhao Ziyang has not disappeared, and neither have his followers. (Zhao's blurred photograph was featured in a recent exhibition.) They provide a ready-made democratizing alternative within the party and have a strong following among younger and better-educated party members, as well as in society at large.

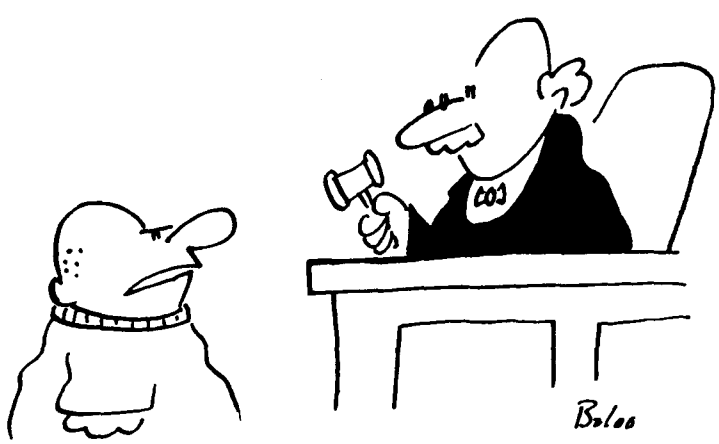
Nor will the crackdown solve any of the problems now destabilizing China at the grassroots. China's industrial unemployed and their dependents number something like 80 million. They are matched by the huge numbers of floating Chinese, mainly farmers who have abandoned rural poverty to seek work in the cities. Last year, police shot dead rural protesters—news that must worry a Communist party that rode to power on agrarian grievances.

If the regime deals with these problems repressively, it will poison its relations with other countries, which will make everything yet worse by reducing investment and foreign endorsement of the leadership. Polls show human rights to be the foremost concern of Americans about China, ahead of economic and military issues. (The Clinton White House, of course, reads polls). Meanwhile, the brutalization of Tibet continues, and in Xinjiang the Muslim uprising grows, in the words of the regional party secretary, more "acute and complicated."

The international community no longer accepts the need for stability as a justification for repression; Indonesia is a strong reminder of that. Many Chinese are embarrassed that their country, with its unsurpassed cultural legacy, should still be ruled by a dictatorship, when states they would never consider peers, such as Nigeria and Mongolia, are far ahead of them. Beijing's recent signing of the U.N. covenant on human rights indicates as much. Taiwan, too, is a strong influence. Film clips of fistfights in the Taipei legislature remain a staple of Chinese media attacks on the island's "false democracy," but the example is powerful—so much so that some of Jiang's advisors are encouraging emulation.

And that is good advice. For political pluralism, as imprisoned dissident Xu Wenli puts it, is "historically inevitable." Postponing significant political reform in China—a free press, a multi-party system, free elections, etc.—only increases the likelihood of unrest. The turn to repression is worse than quixotic. It will not "work," even if, in the name of "stability" and "engagement," the rest of the world is corralled into playing along, as the usual Western Sinologists are already urging. In China today, the only path toward stability is one that also leads to freedom, justice, and participatory politics.

So when, inevitably, the trouble begins in China, we should remember that the course was set in 1998, by the Communist leadership itself. **NR**



"I bet this is going to be another round of criminal bashing, isn't it?"

■ PERSONAL ■

My I-Day

What I did while Clinton was impeached.

LUCIANNE GOLDBERG

I SPENT most of 1998 trying to keep the press out of my apartment. In the beginning—Week One of Monica Madness—I permitted *The New Yorker*'s Jane Mayer to come sit on my couch. Foolish. I wasn't happy with the article that followed, or with her media tour to promote it. Later, when the attacks on me were getting ultra-personal, I let CNN in, with lots of equipment. That didn't accomplish much. But they did remove all the furniture from my dining room, revealing more dust bunnies than could be found in your average college-dorm room.

As Impeachment Day approached, CBS called. They wanted to send over a

Mrs. Goldberg is a literary agent in New York.

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crew to watch me react to the Big Event, an event that some claimed I had brought about. But I knew that watching me watching that would be like watching paint dry. So I refused. America's viewers owe me their thanks.

I wanted to be alone. I enjoy my own company, and I wanted zero distractions from that historic moment. For a media junkie and major-league Clinton-basher, this was a once-in-a-lifetime Super Bowl.

What to wear, what to eat? I selected my most comfortable sweat clothes, microwaved a bag of Orville Redenbacher, snapped open a can of Diet Coke, and settled into the rumpsprung thrift-shop couch from which Jane Mayer had annoyed me. And—most deliciously—Jimmy Breslin wasn't sitting next to me.

Breslin (whose politics and personal style have set my teeth on edge for 30 years) had phoned earlier in the week. The old columnist lives in my neighborhood, along with most of the other die-hard Clintonistas east of Malibu. Could he sit by my side as I savored the impeachment of William J.? I had learned from experience that Breslin can be pretty nasty to those who don't care to talk to him, so I made sure I was extra-sweet to him on the phone. I'm so sorry, I said. I was planning to travel to Washington for I-Day. (This was before the First Feeler-upper decided that the safety and security of the world absolutely, positively demanded that he bomb Iraq, that very week—thereby postponing his impeachment and scotching my plans.)

"How are you getting to Washington?" Breslin asked.

Now, talking to Jimmy Breslin is a little like talking to John Gotti, so I was responding to an implied threat.

"The shuttle," I ventured.

"I'll come with you."

I pictured sitting on a plane for an hour with Breslin staring at me. I pictured hailing a cab to my son Jonah's D.C. apartment, with Breslin looking on. I pictured opening the door, making a cup of tea, and phoning my friends on the Hill (to check whether they could get me in to see the action)—with Breslin taking notes. And I pictured the column that would ensue.

"I'm afraid I simply can't," I finally said, giving Breslin the dodge.

As I watched the impeachment exercise unfold, I thought about how much a chick thing this whole drama had been. The House was about to impeach the president for lying about something he had done with a chick (and for compelling other public officials to cooperate in his lies). He had been caught by a chick: Linda Tripp (chicks are ageless, by the way). And he had been justly tormented by a chick: me (which, by the way, is why I say "ageless").

CBS wanted to send a crew to watch me react to the Big Event.

What's more, there was Bob Livingston, the Speaker-go-splat. It was during my first bag of Orville Redenbacher that he gave his speech, head bowed, black-belt buff under his serious resignation suit. I tried to imagine him kicking back in the gloom of his office, late at night, dialing a 900 number for a chat with Felicity Sprinkle. Chicks—or his weakness before them—had done him in, too.

The Associated Press called. What was I doing? Eating popcorn. How did I feel? Fine. (After all, Jimmy Breslin wasn't there, and neither was Jane Mayer.)

I went back to the TV. Clinton had brought himself and the country to this sorry state because he lied about his chick problem. Every blunder he had made was driven by his overwhelming Baptist guilt at getting drawn in by yet another chick—and getting caught.

I thought of Clinton as a boy, lying awake at dawn in the tiny house in Hot Springs, circa 1953, and what a rotten life it must have been. Thank goodness for the race track, the cheap bars, and a few colorful two-bit gangsters to take his mother out. And what must little Billy have heard through those thin chipboard walls? Who can say what terrible things he was subjected to during countless gin-soaked arguments?

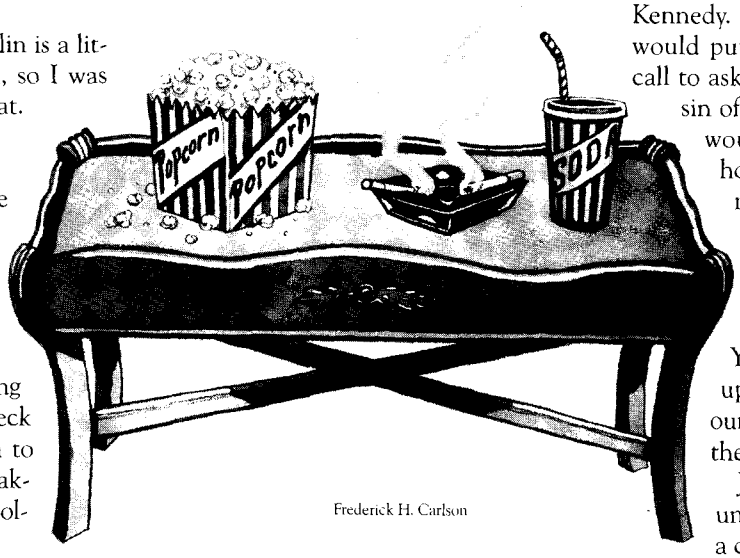
His hagiographers blubber about the time he kept his stepfather from punching out his mother. But who knows how long this had gone on before Billy was big enough—or had cried enough—to stop it? Was that what had kinked him up? Was that why he had spent the rest of his life jumping on women in hotels and in the backs of cars and in the bathroom off the Oval Office?

I lay my head against the cushions as the voting for the first article of impeachment began. The phone rang, waking me. "That's it," Jonah was saying. "He's been impeached. Hey, you weren't asleep, were you?" I was embarrassed, but—un-Clinton-like—I admitted it. "Well, stay awake, Mom, they're gonna do it again."

Later, I noted that Clinton had been impeached at 1:22 P.M., the precise time at which Walter Cronkite had announced the death of President Kennedy. I wondered who in the media would put two and two together and call to ask whether I felt like the assassin of Bill Clinton. I wondered if it would be Breslin, looking for a hot quote. "Clinton just assassinated himself," I was prepared to say. "But he won't lie down."

So, am I happy that Clinton has been impeached? Yes. Yes, I am. We can't bring up children in a world where our leaders swear to God to tell the truth and then lie.

Jimmy Breslin, for one, doesn't understand. But I do. Maybe it's a chick thing. **NR**



Frederick H. Carlson

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The "Loyalty Trap"

Glenn Loury, a once-conservative black intellectual, turns himself inside out.

NORMAN PODHORETZ

SOME 15 or 20 years ago, a young black intellectual named Glenn C. Loury—who had risen from the South Side of Chicago to a professorship in economics at Harvard—came to the realization that (in his own italics) "*only blacks can talk about what other blacks 'should' do, think, or value and expect to be sympathetically heard.*" From this he concluded (still in his own italics) that "*only blacks can effectively provide moral leadership for their people*," and that such leadership could only "come from within."

Not only did Loury follow through on this realization in a steady stream of essays, reviews, and papers at academic conferences. He capped it with a ringing declaration of independence:

> I have had quite enough of the timidity, wrongheadedness and moral relativism that characterizes so much of the commentary of contemporary black elites on the racial issues of our day. The time has come to break ranks with them. These elites are caught in a "loyalty trap." They are fearful of engaging in a candid, critical appraisal of the condition of our people because they do not want to appear disloyal to the race. But this rhetorical reticence has serious negative consequences for the ability of blacks as a group to grapple with the real problems that confront us. Moreover, it represents a failure of nerve in the face of adversity that may be more accurately characterized as intellectual treason than racial fealty.

Stronger words could scarcely be imagined. And yet, after living up to them for more than a decade, Loury himself began falling victim to his own indictment. It is a curious story in its own right, but it also casts light on the question of why the "dialogue" on race that so many people keep calling for has become all but impossible to conduct.

ECHOES OF BALDWIN

I no longer remember when I first came upon Loury's work; probably it was in a piece called "The Moral Quandary of the Black Community" that appeared in *The Public Interest* in 1985. But I do remember vividly the impression that essay made on me. Loury approached the issue of race in terms that linked him to the policymaking fraternity rather than to the world of literature. Nevertheless, I was poignantly reminded of how the early essays of the novelist James Baldwin had struck me and my friends when we first read them as undergraduates at Columbia College in the late 1940s.

It was not, I hasten to emphasize, Loury's style or rhetoric that conjured up the Baldwin of that period. As the passage I have just cited suggests, Loury was a good writer—lucid, forceful, and sometimes even eloquent—especially when compared with the general run of economists and social scientists. But in this line of country he was not remotely in the young Baldwin's league and bore no literary resemblance to him. Still, he possessed the same quality that had led me and my friends at Columbia to speculate on whether the author of the essay "Everyone's Protest Novel," which came out in *Partisan Review* in 1947, was white or (to use the designation of the day) a Negro. This quality was *disinterestedness*, and it derived from a mind and a pen that were devoted to telling as much of the exact truth about the issue of race as the author knew and could communicate. What Baldwin wanted to do, in other words—the words of the great Victorian critic Matthew Arnold—was "to see the object as in itself it really is."

It was because none of us had ever read writing of that special nature by a Negro that we wondered whether Baldwin might be white. On the other hand, how could a white writer have been so intimate with Negro life, and how could he have acquired such a feel for the concrete textures of it? We concluded, then, that Baldwin must after all have been a Negro. At the same time, we also recognized that he differed in an essential way from the likes of Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, and Richard Wright.

Indeed, it was precisely by rejecting the tradition of "protest"—embodied for him most forcefully in Wright's work—with its axiomatic assumptions that the prime task of the Negro writer was to represent his people as nothing but victims and to excoriate the white world for oppressing them, that Baldwin had made himself into a new breed of Negro writer. The tradition he was criticizing could be summed up (though he did not do so himself) in the lyrics of the old song, "You made me what I am today, I hope you're satisfied." This, in effect, was the message of Wright's most famous novel,

Mr. Podhoretz, a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute, was for 35 years editor-in-chief of *Commentary* and is now its editor-at-large. His personal report from Israel appeared in NATIONAL REVIEW's December 21 issue, and his new book, *Ex-Friends*, will be published by Free Press in February.

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Native Son, in which the main character, Bigger Thomas, is a virtual automaton who is turned by white society into a brutal rapist and murderer.

In separating himself from any such message, Baldwin was speaking less out of ethical than out of aesthetic considerations. From his point of view, the trouble with treating Negroes as pure victims with no will of their own was not so much that it was morally wrong to deny any human being his own individual responsibility as that it was detrimental to the production of good novels.

THE PARTY LINE

By the time Glenn Loury came along about 35 years later, literature had lost the veritably sacred character it had possessed in the young Baldwin's time, and had been, like everything else, subordinated to political considerations. Not, I imagine, that it ever entered Loury's mind that aesthetics might be at least as important as morals and politics. Even so, within the intellectual modality and the conceptual framework in which he operated as a social critic, he seemed irresistibly attracted to an ambition similar to the young Baldwin's.

In one of his early essays, he even made a point of quoting extensively from "Everyone's Protest Novel," and there can be no doubt that he wanted to defy the same conventional wisdom that Baldwin had challenged in a very different way and in a very different era. Of course, that "wisdom"—which, to sum it up once more, for all practical purposes deprived blacks, as they were by now called, of any responsibility for their own fate—had grown so much more pervasive and powerful since the late Forties that (as we shall see) it even succeeded in engulfing Baldwin himself. Which means that if Baldwin, as a trailblazer, was the more original of the two, Loury was perhaps the braver.

Yet as the name of Thomas Sowell preeminently attests, Loury was far from the most courageous of the very few black economists and social scientists who preceded or joined him in this dangerous project. Unlike the utterly fearless Sowell, Loury—as I now realize from having reread him but did not notice the first time around—often engaged in a certain amount of equivocation and pulled a certain number of punches. Again unlike Sowell, who never deigned to look nervously over his shoulder at the surrounding brigades of what would later become notorious as "political correctness," Loury rarely forgot that they were there. I see now that he usually took care to endorse what in other contexts he himself did not hesitate to call the "party line" of the civil-rights movement, though—to be fair—he seemed entirely sincere in acknowledging the contributions that movement had made in the past and might continue to make in the future.

Still, it is no surprise that these obeisances to the civil-rights movement left so little trace on my mind (or, I daresay, on anyone else's). For they were not much more than passing ritualistic bows. The overriding emphasis in Loury was on a critique of the apologetics or special pleading or public relations that so often marred writing by blacks about blacks (just as in my opinion it did, though to a much lesser extent, by Jews about Jews). What shone with incandescent brightness out of "The Moral Quandary of the Black Community," and most of the other essays Loury went on to write in those days, was a fierce determination to transcend the movement's dogmas on the problems of that community, and, as with Baldwin before him, to see the object as in itself it really was.

True, Loury had his shortcomings as measured against Thomas Sowell (whose ever growing range and depth of scholarship would make him look more and more like a giant). Yet from that day to this, Loury was still only one of a very small band of black intellectuals who had the critical independence, the spiritual temerity, and the moral stamina to stand up against the tidal wave of assumptions and attitudes that had gradually hardened into the one great dogma of many (most?) American blacks and an even greater major-

■

Loury often engaged in a certain amount of equivocation and pulled a certain number of punches.

■

ity of their leaders, backed up by the white liberals who took their cue from those leaders: *White society is solely and wholly responsible for our condition and our fate, and it is therefore entirely and exclusively the responsibility of white society to repair the damage it has done to us.*

When James Baldwin erupted onto the scene to question this same dogma, it was still based on a relatively innocent and even naïve presupposition. The idea then was that nothing stood in the way of Negro progress except a set of external obstacles that had been placed there by unconstitutional laws and other less formal discriminatory barriers. Repeal those laws and remove those barriers, and all would be well.

Under pressure from the then aptly named civil-rights movement, all three branches of government were stirred into action. Private institutions, including universities, labor unions, and corporations, were also goaded into efforts of their own to rectify the discriminatory exclusions of the past. This took the form of "affirmative action"—a policy or technique that to begin with entailed nothing more than seeking out and recruiting qualified blacks who would otherwise have been overlooked.

Yet to the traumatic surprise of many people, it emerged that the "pool" of qualified blacks was very shallow, especially where higher education was concerned. So shallow was it that the Ivy League universities, for example, were unable to unearth enough blacks with the academic qualifications to be admitted by the normal standards.

What then was to be done? The first stab at a remedy was extra tutoring to bring the candidates up to scratch. Before long, however, it became evident that a little, or even a lot, of extra tutoring would not suffice to do the trick. In fact, the despairing conclusion reached was that nothing would do the trick but the lowering of standards to the point where a predetermined quota of blacks could be filled.

To make matters worse, as this process was going on, the

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institutions adopting it (often at the prodding of courts and federal bureaucracies, which had managed to interpret Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act to mean exactly the opposite of what it said when it explicitly forbade reverse discrimination and quotas) simply denied they were doing what they were doing, or flat-out lied about it. Thus was bred a wholesale corruption of thought and public discourse. Inexorably, this led to a kind of censorship—and, as Loury later added, self-censorship—designed to prevent the truth from being spoken aloud.

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The old civil-rights movement had found itself at a loss to explain why the achievement of so many of its original goals did not bring about the predicted results.

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The *only* acceptable position now became that there was nothing blacks themselves needed to do or stop doing to improve their lot. It was up to the government to create and pay for "programs" that would solve every one of their problems. And when such programs failed, as so many did, it meant not that there was anything wrong with their design or the reasoning behind their establishment—let alone that there were severe limits to what government action could accomplish in this area—but only that they had been insufficiently funded.

To disagree with this position was at best to be accused of "blaming the victim" and at worst to be branded a racist, even if one had a long history of support for the civil-rights movement. But though it still held on to the name, that movement had by slow degrees been transformed from within and supplanted by various strands of black nationalism. The old civil-rights movement had found itself at a loss to explain why the achievement of so many of its original goals did not bring about the predicted results of "integration" and economic progress among the poorest of the black poor. It had therefore come up against the horrible possibility that there were (in Loury's own phrase) "pathological behaviors" within the black community itself that could not simply be attributed to the depredations of white society and could not be affected by governmental intervention. By contrast, black nationalists like the Black Muslims had no such problem. In their unshakable view, racism was still the cause of black misery, but it was a racism so deeply embedded in the institutions of American society as often to be invisible.

REHABILITATING BOOKER T.

Smack into the midst of the debates engendered by these developments walked a defiant Glenn Loury. In essay after essay, he tried to show that in the "post-civil-rights environment," black progress no longer depended, as it once to a considerable extent had, on the white world. Or, as he put it in more graphic terms, the fight to be fought was no longer against the "enemy without" but rather against the "enemy within." Here is the key passage:

> [I]t is now beyond dispute that many of the problems of contemporary black American life lie outside the reach of effective government action, and require for their successful resolution actions that can be undertaken only by the black community itself. These problems involve at their core the values, attitudes, and behaviors of individual blacks. They are exemplified by the staggering statistics on pregnancies among young, unwed black women and the arrest and incarceration rates among black men.

It is hard to convey how daring, how audacious, such a statement sounded in 1985, and how thrilling; and Loury would go on to make many more like it. The logical conclusion was that the answer lay in self-help—not, to be sure, of the Black Muslim variety, which was contaminated by its own inverse racism, anti-Semitism, and separatism, but of the type advocated by Booker T. Washington in the immediate aftermath of the abolition of slavery.

Washington had been attacked in his own time as a "traitor to his race" and was still looked upon with contempt by many blacks, for rejecting the political agitation advocated by his great antagonist W.E.B. Du Bois. What Washington pushed for instead was an emphasis on (as Loury put it in a powerful essay that attempted to rehabilitate him) "the Protestant virtues of thrift, industry, cleanliness, chastity, and orderliness" that were so notably lacking among the newly freed slaves.

Without quite claiming that history had vindicated Washington in his debate with Du Bois, Loury did insist (again with his own italics) that the "animating *spirit*" of Washington's philosophy "offers a sounder guide to the future for blacks than that reflected in the worldview of his critics." And Loury, with perhaps the most stunning audacity he would ever summon up, scorned the usual resort to euphemisms in outlining the goals toward which such a strategy aimed: "The progress which must now be sought is that of achieving honor, respect, equal standing in the eyes of one's political peers, and worthiness as objects of national concern."

Honor, respect, worthiness: the very words had a tonic effect on the mind and the soul alike.

It would be easy to go on and on citing similarly exhilarating passages from the essays collected in Loury's tellingly entitled book *One by One from the Inside Out*. It would be equally easy to quote from his pieces about other black intellectuals (including Cornel West, Derrick Bell, and Stephen L. Carter) to show how harshly he could reprove those who insisted on providing fancy rationalizations for the driving dogmas of the old civil-rights movement at a time when such ideas and the forces behind them had grown not only obsolete but positively harmful to the very people whose betterment they purported to pursue.

INTELLECTUAL AMNESIA

But then—it is very difficult to place one's finger on the exact moment—something happened to Glenn Loury, and virtually his whole moral and political viewpoint was turned upside down. Now it was the people—white conservatives,

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for the most part—who had always agreed with and supported and applauded him toward whom he became harsh. He accused them of contenting themselves with exposing the deficiencies of their opponents on the left while failing to offer any alternative remedies of their own; and he attributed this failure to a callous lack of concern for the sufferings of the black community. What was even more bizarre, he now began providing his own fancy rationalizations for some of the main policies and strategies against which he had previously mounted such forceful arguments.

Everyone has a right to change his mind. Having done so myself in moving from left to right more than 30 years ago, I am the last person in the world to criticize Loury or anyone else merely for going in the other direction. But what was strange and different about Loury's transformation was that in repudiating his old ideas he rarely took the trouble to reexamine them. Instead, he all but ignored them, as though he had been stricken with a case of intellectual amnesia.

The most blatant example was affirmative action. Loury had previously constructed one of the best cases against it, but like Bill Clinton, he now wanted to "mend it, not end it." How did he propose to do that? Through a program that bore an uncanny resemblance to the original conception of affirmative action, which (to repeat) demanded only special efforts to seek out and recruit qualified blacks who had been overlooked and, where necessary, to provide them with additional training to bring them up to competitive scratch. In outlining this "new" program, Loury gave not the slightest indication that we had already had more than three decades of experience with it. Neither did he evince the slightest awareness of the corruptions that had infected it. And still less did he make the slightest effort to explain why and how the same corruptions could be prevented from infecting it all over again.

His attack on conservatives for failing to come up with alternative remedies was also bizarre. As I have already indicated, in his earlier work, while his main stress was on the need of blacks for the kind of reforms that could only "come from within," he always made sure to leave some running room for a contribution by outside agencies, whether governmental or private. Yet whenever he spelled out what these contributions might be, they were invariably programs of conservative provenance—such things as (in his summary) "enterprise zones, a subminimum wage for the hard to employ, ownership possibilities for responsible public-housing tenants, and support for the development of a strong black entrepreneurial class."

Now, whatever the merits of these proposals—and others, like school vouchers—they *were* proposals, and it was simply absurd to accuse those who advanced them of believing in "benign neglect." (On the other hand, as an unregenerate and unreconstructed holder of the old Loury's view that in the post-civil-rights era only blacks can do for themselves what they need done, and that this emphatically and crucially includes breaking the cycle of dependency upon government, I plead guilty to being a supporter of benign neglect myself.)

But if the new Loury himself had developed serious doubts about the conservative program, he never came up with anything correlatively new to take its place. When, for instance, I once pressed him in conversation on what exactly he now wanted the government to do, all he could think of was "improve the schools." Thus had the new Loury rediscovered the truth of what the old Adam in him had known all along: that "it is much easier to assert that something must be done than it is to set out an agenda for action."

I use the phrase "old Adam" advisedly because, as Loury informs us in the epilogue to *One by One from the Inside Out*, he has been a born-again Christian since 1989. As it turned out to the amazement and shock of many, he had long been a drug addict and an abuser of women, and it was only through religion that he found his way back to health, tranquility, and marital stability. I have no doubt that there was some connection between this spiritual development and the political transformation he also underwent, though I would be hard put to pin the connection down with any precision. Quite the contrary: It is puzzling that he should have grown so eager since becoming a Christian to excoriate white conservatives for their lack of compassion toward the black underclass, while playing down his exhortations to his fellow blacks to save their own souls and render unto Caesar what is Caesar's.

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There is definitely a note of (dare I say?) un-Christian bitterness and betrayal in the tone he now uses when speaking of those who were once his friends and allies.

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Be that as it may, there is definitely a note of (dare I say?) un-Christian bitterness and betrayal in the tone he now uses when speaking of those who were once his friends and allies. He even goes so far as to throw the word "sin" at Stephan and Abigail Thernstrom's book *America in Black and White*, for what he (wrongly) considers its "fixation" on "the fact that racial liberals are confused, angry, and scared."

Nor have I been spared. As the editor of *Commentary*, I published a goodly number of Loury's first pieces, and our personal relations were always cordial. But then came *The Bell Curve* by Charles Murray and the late Richard Herrnstein. *Commentary* ran a largely favorable though by no means uncritical review of the book, but when practically everyone in the world joined forces in an attempt to discredit its findings, we thought it would be an important contribution to the debate if Murray answered his critics, and we invited him to do so. While we were awaiting his manuscript, Loury asked us to commission him to write an attack of his own on the book, but we turned him down because it had already been reviewed, because there would be more by Murray himself, and because enough was enough. As he made abundantly clear both in private and in public, Loury felt betrayed by us for refusing to allow him to use the pages

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of *Commentary* to join in the almost universal assault. In this manner, I may have given an extra push to his turn away from conservatism.

Yet it was not as though he had nowhere else to go with his attack on *The Bell Curve*. In fact, in *One by One from the Inside Out*, he includes rather a good piece on the book, his main point being that free will always has trumped and always will trump genetic dispositions. Would that everyone had stressed this point and underscored it much more heavily than Murray and Herrnstein did, instead of beating them about

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Loury seems to have concluded that 'the conservatives' had fallen for a classically racist position.

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the head with spurious or ill-informed criticisms of their statistics and their scholarship or ad-hominem attacks on their personal characters. (But I suspect that a dirty little secret was at work here: that, deep down, many of *The Bell Curve*'s antagonists of both races secretly believe that blacks really are by genetic endowment less intelligent than whites or Asians, and that what unleashed the hysterical assault on the book was that it seemed to confirm dread fears that have been severely repressed.)

Nor was it the case that all or even most conservative publications sided with Murray and Herrnstein: NATIONAL REVIEW itself dealt with them through an evenhanded debate. Nor, finally, did I myself unqualifiedly endorse the more speculative conclusions of *The Bell Curve*. For whatever it may be worth, my own view was and is that the book's critics hardly laid a glove on the evidence it amassed about blacks *as a group* and that all the indignation and denunciations in the world could never—as the old Loury was wont to say about analogous matters—make that evidence go away. However, I agree wholeheartedly with Loury's conviction that, where *individuals* are concerned, free will is ineradicable and that it is more powerful than any genetic tendencies.

In spite of all this, Loury seems to have concluded that "the conservatives" had fallen for a classically racist position. If that were true, I could sympathize with his decision to dissociate himself from them. But being false, it cannot justify the transformation in his position. Probably he would argue that it is his emphasis rather than his position that has shifted, that this position has always been complex, and that even while calling for a new struggle against the enemy within he had never denied that the enemy without still existed—that is, that racism remained a problem in America and that government had a role to play in helping the black community overcome it.

Yet to say it one last time, it was just this emphasis on the enemy within that gave impact to Loury's earlier essays. And in any event, as Loury himself made no bones about asserting in a review of Stephen Carter's *Reflections of an Affirmative Action Baby*, there is a significant difference between, on the one side, genuine intellectual complexity and, on the other, political equivocation or trying to have things both ways. In his review, he accused Carter of the latter, and here I accuse him of the same fault.

But I do so with a heavy heart. To explain why, let me come full circle to James Baldwin. At some point in the 1960s, Baldwin began abandoning disinterestedness and decided that his duty lay in standing with "his people." This involved embracing the very attitudes about race associated with the tradition of "protest" that he had come into his literary own by repudiating, and even though the first fruit of the change ("The Fire Next Time," his long essay about the Black Muslims) was dazzling, it eventually destroyed him as a writer. (Anyone who doubts this should compare the first volume of his work that has recently been reissued by the Library of America with the second.) Even a political opponent can acknowledge that Baldwin's decision may in some sense be considered an honorable and even a noble one, but there is no denying that the price he paid for it was to ruin his own talent and impoverish the rest of us.

So it is with Glenn Loury. As a social critic he began much as Baldwin had begun as a writer, but having fallen, or perhaps deliberately leaped, into "the loyalty trap" he once worked so hard to escape, he is now following in the footsteps of his predecessor's sorry journey from originality and courage to vacuous rhetorical preachments and a blurring of focus on the realities that in the past he so sharply saw and so bravely described. The loss to his fellow blacks, and to the rest of us as well, is incalculable. **NR**

Shrill Waters

Move aside, James Carville: Big Bad Max is the loudest, toughest, meanest Clinton-defender of them all.

JAY NORDLINGER

REP. Maxine Waters, the notorious Los Angeles Democrat, is a believer in the public outburst. During the Whitewater hearings five years ago, she screamed, "Shut up! Shut up!" at a Republican colleague, who had dared ask discomfiting questions of Margaret Williams, the First Lady's chief of staff. Williams, it is necessary to note, is black, as is Waters—and the congresswoman proudly acts the part of Defender of the Race, as well as of Womanhood. On the House floor the next day, she declared that she was "pleased" to have run interference for Williams, as "the day is over when men can badger and intimidate women, marginalize them, and keep them from speaking." All the while, the (Democratic) Speaker tried to gavel her down, in vain.

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Last month, on Impeachment Day, Waters again raised a ruckus, when Bob Livingston—then Speaker-to-be—urged the president to resign. That was far too much for Waters, the most excitable Clinton defender in Congress: Slamming her hand on a table and leading a chorus of Democratic booers and hissers, she yelled, "You resign! You resign!" And, lo, he did.

Waters, to say the least, is no violet. She may in fact be the foremost hater in American politics. She is known in her home state as "Maxine the Mouth," or "Mad Maxine," or "Big Bad Max." After she offered rationalizations for the L.A. riots in 1992, one of her antagonists, the radio personality Larry Elder, dubbed her "Kerosene Maxine." Now, her scowl and vituperation are known coast to coast, thanks to her prominence on the Judiciary Committee. She spent most of 1998 reviling Kenneth Starr and propping up Clinton, interpreting the effort to impeach him as (yes) an attack on black America. She is a political radical, a talented self-promoter, and more than a bit of a racial messianist (she is in the habit of referring to "my people," whom she protects from "the enemy"). To her admirers, she is a populist fighter, pleading the causes of the ignored and the dispossessed. To her opponents, she is (in Elder's words) a "dangerous, irresponsible, loudmouth, race-hustling victocrat" (Elder's term for a trader on victimization). Either way, Big Bad Max—whose personal motto is, "I don't have time to be polite"—is a new power in the Democratic party, a star of the clenched-fist Left.

Waters, scrappy at 60, grew up in St. Louis, one of 13 children in a family that relied, sporadically, on welfare. After moving to Los Angeles, she became an activist and campaign operator. She was elected to the state assembly in 1976, where she served 14 years, rising to chairman of the Democratic caucus. In 1991, her constituents in South Central L.A. sent her to Congress—just in time for the Gulf War. Waters was not only opposed to that war, she was one of a handful of House members who voted against a pro-forma resolution rallying behind it, well after it was under way. She had told a student audience, "Many African-American men and women, Latino Hispanics—they will not have any future. They're going to die." (The white soldiers, presumably, were impervious.) She wondered, "How can you tell the Crips and the Bloods [rival gangs] that you do not defend your territory by battling it out when we have our own leaders battling it out?" Later, at the war's conclusion, she sponsored a resolution praising black and Hispanic troops for their contributions and calling for special government programs to aid them back home. (Waters, incidentally, uttered not a peep of public protest when President Clinton throttled Iraq on Impeachment Eve.)

It was during the L.A. riots, in April 1992, that Waters first tasted serious national fame. She described those riots as a "rebellion" or "uprising," claiming that "the anger in my district is a righteous anger," to be appeased by a "sharing of resources." Why, "I'm just as angry as they are," she avowed. Her own office burned to the ground, but she dismissed her former digs as "just another victim of the rebellion." She took offense when Mayor Tom Bradley, her erstwhile political patron, characterized the rioters as "hoodlums and thugs." No, she insisted: "There were mothers who took this as an opportunity to take some milk, to take some bread, to take some shoes. . . . One lady said her children didn't have any shoes. She just saw those shoes there . . . G**d*** it! It was such a tearjerker. I might have gone in and taken them for her myself."

As to the suffering of Korean-American shopkeepers, the particular objects of murder, arson, and theft during the mayhem, Waters explained, "Blacks don't hate anybody. They just don't understand how [Asian entrepreneurs] can move in and have businesses and be the owner of things they can't have." And when she was chastised for appearing to fuel, rather than discourage, the violence, Waters had an answer, shared with a church congregation: "People want to know

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After she offered rationalizations for the L.A. riots in 1992, one of her antagonists, the radio personality Larry Elder, dubbed her 'Kerosene Maxine.'

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why I'm not saying exactly what they want me to say. They want me to walk out in Watts, like black people did in the Sixties, and say, 'Cool it, baby, cool it.' Well, I'm sorry: The fact of the matter is, whether we like it or not, riot is the voice of the unheard." Besides which, "it only makes them madder when you call them hoodlums and thugs."

For all this, Peter Jennings of ABC designated Waters "Person of the Week," a "woman who simply will not go unheard."

Waters has been heard repeatedly in the ensuing years, whether throwing fits, chaining herself to the White House gates (in protest of Haiti policy), or pushing conspiracy theories. Joel Kotkin, a Democratic policy analyst and professor at Pepperdine, remembers when he conducted a briefing for California Democrats in Congress, at the request of Rep. Howard Berman. Waters, irked at something he had written, marched in halfway through and heckled him, then marched back out. Other congressmen simply looked at the floor, embarrassed and uncomfortable. One explained to Kotkin, "Look, this is Maxine, and we just put up with it." Kotkin registers a common complaint when he says that Waters is a "bully," who "has the media completely cowed: She is beyond criticism, untouchable."

Indeed, few murmured when Waters championed the contention that the CIA, through the Nicaraguan contras, had spread crack cocaine through central Los Angeles, for the purpose of addicting and demoralizing the black population. She has recently supplied the foreword to *Dark Alliance*, by Gary Webb, the leading purveyor of this theory. (Webb first made his charges in the *San Jose Mercury-News*, which, after thorough debunking by other newspapers, was forced to apologize for the story.) Waters maintains in the current issue of

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Essence magazine that, as far as CIA drug-trafficking in inner cities is concerned, "They are still in it." She also wonders whether "there isn't some agreement with newspapers not to talk about the CIA based on national security." While "the black press has been wonderful," she says, "most of the major media would like me to shut up and go away." And drug czar Barry McCaffrey, with his focus on the suburbs, has "a soccer-mom mentality": He "doesn't show up in our communities or cooperate with the caucus" (meaning the Congressional Black Caucus, of which Waters has just finished a term as chairman).

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She seconded Clinton's nomination at the '92 convention, but warned, 'This is the last time I support an all-white anything.'

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So too, Waters has linked arms with the conspiratorial Right in suspecting that commerce secretary Ron Brown, who with 34 others died in a plane crash in 1996, was, in fact, murdered. Along with comedian-activist Dick Gregory and the NAACP's Kweisi Mfume, she has demanded an investigation.

On the international front, Waters wrote a highly unusual note last September to Fidel Castro—a note of apology and explanation. She had voted for a measure calling for the extradition from Cuba of one Joanne Chesimard, who, as a member of the "Black Liberation Army," murdered a policeman in 1973. Chesimard was imprisoned, but escaped in 1979, fleeing to Castro's island, where she was granted "political asylum." Waters wrote to Castro that, in casting her vote, she had not been aware that "Joanne Chesimard was the birth name of a political activist known to most Members of the Congressional Black Caucus as Assata Shakur." The "Republican leadership," she said, had "quietly slipped this bill onto the accelerated calendar," which, she helpfully explained, "is supposed to be reserved for non-controversial legislation like naming federal buildings and post offices." As "evidence of their deceptive intent," she continued, GOP leaders "did not mention Assata Shakur, but chose to only call her Joanne Chesimard." Hence, the erring vote. She confided to Castro that the Sixties and Seventies had been "a sad and shameful chapter of our history," when "vicious and reprehensible acts were taken against" black revolutionaries, resulting in the need to "flee political persecution." Concluded Waters, "I hope that my position is clear."

If any member of Congress had before written a dictator to lament the tactics of the other party, that missive is unknown.

It is her unceasing agitation for Clinton, however, that has made her a full-blown celebrity. She seconded Clinton's nomination at the '92 convention, but warned, "This is the last time I support an all-white anything." From 2000 on, there had to be "minorities or women" on the ticket, "or I will not be a Democrat supporting it." Meanwhile, "I am going to help [Clinton and Gore] get elected, and they better not mess with me once they get in." Needless to say, they have not. (Clinton promptly appointed Waters's husband, Sidney Williams, a former NFL player and Mercedes-Benz dealer, ambassador to the Bahamas.)

As soon as the president faced fire over Monica Lewinsky, Waters was at the ramparts, pronouncing herself the "fairness cop," who would not let the president be "railroaded." "More than anybody else," she told the press, black Americans "understand what it means to have fairness. We understand what it means to make sure there is not an abuse of power" (meaning, naturally, the independent counsel's). When Clinton appeared at a fundraiser for her in August, she declared, in a widely quoted comment, "We're not fair-weather friends. We will be with you to the end."

During the impeachment hearings, she glared disturbingly at Starr as he testified, and she jumped all over Republican colleagues who seemed to be scoring points, shouting, "Point of personal privilege!" Her identification of Clinton's predicament with race is near total. In her final statement before the committee, she said, "I am here in the name of my slave ancestors, to insist that the president be afforded" his constitutional rights. She recounted that she had awakened "in the middle of the night, with flashes of the struggles of my slave ancestors for justice." Before the full House, on Impeachment Day, she asserted that Republicans were the tools of "right-wing Christian Coalition extremists" seeking "to direct and control our culture." The president, she said, "is not guilty of the trumped-up charges" contained in the impeachment articles; rather, he "is guilty of being a populist leader who opened up government and access to the poor, to minorities, to women, and to the working class."

After reminding her audience that "I am an African-American woman" and judging Starr "guilty," she rose to her peroration, somewhat amazing, given the source: "I am greatly disappointed in the raw, unmasked, unbridled hatred and meanness that drives this impeachment coup d'état." If the House voted to impeach, she admonished, that action would be enshrined in history as "despicable."

One veteran Judiciary Committee staffer holds that Waters has actually mellowed over the years, and that the committee's true firebrand is the imperious Sheila Jackson

"Wait a minute Doctor Schulz. I take back what I said about you making me feel guilty for expressing my real feelings."

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Lee of Texas (crowned by the staff "Queen Sheila"). Raphael Sonenshein, a California political scientist who once worked for Waters, argues that she is not the "one-dimensional character," the scowling face, seen on television, but a "multifaceted" public servant who knows how to bargain, compromise, and effect sound policy. She enjoys one of the safest congressional seats in the country, and her national following grows apace. One black theater group, in a performance commissioned by Lincoln Center, offered a fantasy that had Waters inaugurated as president.

Shelby Steele, the social critic, has little patience for Waters and her brand of racialism. He regards her as a stalwart of "the grievance elite," bent on "extracting favors from the larger society." The curious thing, he says, is that "the militancy you see in her is a militancy for black dependence, the very opposite of black nationalism"—making her "a militant Uncle Tom." Waters "gets away with it," Steele observes, "because the larger society [as represented, for example, by white journalists] feels it doesn't have the moral authority to call her on it." For Waters, "there is no such thing as a loyal opposition. The other side is simply evil. The impulse behind this is a little fascistic, a little totalitarian. She never engages her opponents, but only demonizes them." (Waters declined to speak to NATIONAL REVIEW.)

Larry Elder, too, regrets that the congresswoman refuses to participate in a little give-and-take. She has shunned his radio program for years. But Big Bad Max is no doubt about the business—every hour, every day, every week—of protecting "my people" from "the enemy." And, as she will tell you, if you happen to catch her, "I don't have time to be polite." **NR**

New World Order

Behind Saddam's provocations lurks a grand—and terrifying—ambition.

DAVID PRYCE-JONES

"WILLING to wound, and yet afraid to strike." The poet Alexander Pope might have been thinking of President Clinton and his recent raid on Iraq when he wrote that famous line. The bombing was enough to irritate and arouse, but not enough to have any sort of decisive consequence. Coinciding with the impeachment of the president, the timing of the operation placed a somber question mark over the strategy. The United States may have bought a little respite while Iraq repairs the damage, but Saddam Hussein is free from United Nations weapons' inspectors who stick their noses into his military secrets. The war goes on, as several official mouthpieces of Saddam's like to boast. A most peculiar war it is too, one that is highly instructive about the state of the world today, with lessons to be drawn about the nature of power and the likely course of the future.

Iraq is a country of no great importance, except perhaps to archaeologists, and Saddam Hussein is primarily a local hoodlum on the rampage. Iraqis themselves are first and foremost the unfortunate victims of the brute. In former years, expediency alone encouraged Saddam to be the willing client

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Nothing in Saddam Hussein's temperament or background disposes him to be the enemy of America.

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of the Soviet Union, apparently a source of arms and money that would gush forever. The abrupt collapse of this gigantic but crude patron offered him wonderful prospects for cutting loose on his own in accordance with his ambitions. Having established his own absolute and unchallenged power over Iraq and Iraqis, Saddam could set about extending his reach over Iran, Kuwait, Israel—the local hoodlum enlarging into a would-be Arab Bismarck, uniting the whole Middle East under him.

For this, though, he had to come to terms with the United States. Nothing in his temperament or background disposes him to be its natural enemy. No Ayatollah Khomeini, no sort of Muslim fanatic, he is without beliefs or principles, acting exclusively in what he supposes are his personal, self-aggrandizing interests. Ba'ath-ism, his supposed ideology, is only a cover for secret-police methods as the main instrument of rule.

Washington then had to take a view about the man. He could be allowed to swim within limits or he could be sunk. The entire Arab world was confused and frightened by Saddam and his ambitions. Seeking to accommodate the conflicting demands of Arab leaders, Washington proved unable to formulate a coherent policy. In an exaggerated and unpredictable manner, appeasement of Saddam has veered into the use of force against him, and then away from it. On occasion he has been treated as pursuing legitimate goals that concern Arabs alone. In startling contrast, during his protracted war with Ayatollah Khomeini's Iran, he was rescued from defeat as though he were an element of stability rather than a murderous warmonger. In the Gulf War of 1991, he was finally confronted, only to be permitted at the last moment to live to fight another day. With some justification, Saddam is able to plead that he never knows what the United States expects of him.

As a result of these contradictions, Saddam's disregard for law and convention has now swollen out of all proportion to become one of the foremost international issues. The man's survival and range have come to represent a total challenge whose outcome will be perceived everywhere as a touchstone of the balance of power between the West and the rest of the

Mr. Pryce-Jones, a London-based scholar and journalist, is the author of, among other books, *The Closed Circle: An Interpretation of the Arabs.*

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world. If the war is not won, if Saddam is not contained or, better still, destroyed, the West will have suffered the kind of defeat to its democracy and its values that Nazism and then Communism did not inflict.

Saddam Hussein argues that the West has no willpower or self-confidence, cannot accept casualties, and is on the skids historically. Other dictators have mistakenly reached that same conclusion, but the evidence for Western degeneracy looks more convincing today. Of all the Western countries, Britain alone supported the United States materially in the latest round of bombing. This action was a last reflex from its former imperial past, when power and its purposes were properly understood.

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Some specialists conclude that Iran will soon have a nuclear bomb and missiles for delivery, perhaps within two years.

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Very few voices in Britain were raised in support of Prime Minister Blair and the decision to be an active ally of the United States. Spin-doctoring instead stuck on him the label "Mr. Clinton's poodle." Absorbed in creating their protectionist union, the countries of continental Europe are too selfishly at odds to be able to agree on any foreign policy except disdain of the United States and Britain. Aspiring to old-fashioned realpolitik, although they are not in a position to play even a spoiler's role, France and Russia prefer to continue to appease Saddam.

Power brings with it the responsibility to keep the peace. This is the prime axiom of politics everywhere and at all times, and very thankless it is too. For other reasons, President Clinton has already earned an unenviable place in history, but he seems likely also to be remembered as the first American president whose conception of foreign policy was to ignore responsibility and give all comers what they wanted, whether Irish terrorists, Palestinians, Somali warlords, Serbian fascists, or Russian gangsters, irrespective of their hostility to America and everything it stands for.

The past year for him and his administration was one of particular appeasement of Saddam. In February, and again in November, Saddam was allowed to get away with actions against which he had been warned explicitly. In August, U.N. weapons inspectors revealed that Washington was secretly undermining their mission, and might let it lapse into a formality. Once again, Saddam had every reason to be perplexed about the true intention of American policy.

The exceptionally disturbed state of the Middle East precludes any soft option or further appeasement. Egypt may be capable of holding the line against Muslim fundamentalism, but Algeria perhaps not. On his recent visit to Paris, and his first trip abroad in a long while, President Hafez Assad of Syria was seen to be much aged, almost infirm, and his many crimes in office will haunt whoever is his successor. The peace process between Israelis and Palestinians is in a state of suspended animation. Israel has a general election due next May, and Yasser Arafat is visibly suffering from some disease, generally held to be neurological. Palestinians and Jordanians are the Arabs to whom Saddam hopes to appeal for support, and the diminished appearance of King Hussein of Jordan after his cancer treatment sent up shock waves. The old guard is going, but not taking the old troubles with them.

To cap matters, Iran is acquiring weapons of mass destruction. Its nuclear-weapons technology is well advanced, and some specialists conclude that it will soon have a nuclear bomb and the missiles for delivery, perhaps within two years. Russia has been steadily selling Iran the requisite equipment and know-how, and Germany has sold it submarines, which can perhaps be converted to launch a nuclear bomb. China is helping Iran to acquire chemical weapons, recently delivering 500 tons of materials banned under the terms of the Chemical Weapons Convention (to which Iran is of course a signatory).

Should Iran and Iraq both be armed with weapons of mass destruction, a New World Order is at hand, very different indeed from the one so naïvely projected at the end of the Cold War. It is possible to hope that one day Saddam will simply drop his guard and be murdered, perhaps by one of his odious sons. The ayatollahs and mullahs currently ruling Iran are also local hoodlums in their own style, but in addition they claim divine right for their actions. The idea that they might suddenly change into "liberals" sympathetic to the views of others is nothing but wishful thinking. Any policy of giving such people the rewards and subsidies they want serves to raise a monster who will have to be dealt with later from a weakened position.

If the West summons the courage to reject appeasement and surrender, then the process of rethinking first principles begins. Considerations of Ramadan have never stopped Arabs and Muslims from going to war. Egypt and Syria invaded Israel in the middle of Ramadan in 1973, adding to the surprise by taking advantage of the Jewish holy day of Yom Kippur. To have limited the bombing of Iraq on the pretext of Ramadan helped Saddam to claim victory, to wave a Muslim banner, and turn to the "Arab street" to catch the cheering.

Since then, he advances his war almost daily, forbidding the return of the U.N. inspectors, playing on Russian and French weaknesses in order to be divisive, claiming that the no-fly zones over the Shia and Kurdish provinces are infringements of his sovereignty and firing on American and British aircraft accordingly. These moves go unpunished, which further prompts him to test out what else he can do, and how great his scope for action is, in what promises to be a long series of increasing pinpricks whose end is uncertain.

It is too late now to bring the war even to a sustained halt except by retaliation that does justice to the relative power of the contestants. Halfhearted measures imply moral and psychological uncertainty, and so do more harm than good. The dispatch of a mere eight helicopters in the Teheran hostage crisis, and the evacuation of the Marines sent by President Reagan to Beirut as soon as they came under attack, are only two among innumerable recent examples of what not to do in the Middle East.

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Saddam's ambitions will be stayed when the cost of them is too great for him to bear. It is hard to assess the real damage done by the recent bombing. As many as a third of the targets may have escaped, and some of those destroyed may not have had much significance. The next provocation by Saddam should be met instantly and unconditionally with an all-out assault on his military capacity and command centers. What is done to Iraq today may furthermore serve to ensure that it does not have to be repeated in Iran tomorrow.

The Iraqi opposition in exile are far from impressive, unfortunately, but it is conceivable that among them are Saddam's successors, and in any case there is nobody else to work with. Fear of the ultimate break-up of Iraq into its constituent nations and religious groups is a bogey. Iraq is a country with Made in Britain in 1918 stamped on it. Yugoslavia carried the same stamp. Both countries were misconceived, and are now in need of reinvention. "Imperialism!" you may cry, and quite out of date in our fine multicultural world, where everyone does his thing regardless, and all societies have equal merit. But that line of thought consigns Iraqis to the living hell of Saddam's tyranny, and it endangers the Middle East and far beyond. Peace and freedom are indivisible and universal values, even though they may have to be enforced in painful and difficult circumstances. If we no longer believe that, then the West has become pointless, and its day is over. **NR**

Feckless Youth

Hollywood doesn't trust anyone over age 30.

ROB LONG

A FEW years ago, a network-television executive was asked to describe his ideal audience. He was looking for "voracious consumers of free television," he said, people who couldn't afford cable services, didn't have jobs during the day or reasons to go to bed early, and were easily overwhelmed by programming choices and so preferred to stick with one channel throughout the day.

His ideal audience, in other words, was the very young, the very old, and the very sick. Today, the target audience has shifted a bit. The very old and the very sick are on their own. The desirable demographics that all the major networks battle over are the very young, the somewhat young, and the under-30. That's the main reason network television has an eerie *Lord of the Flies* vibe to it: Almost every show features, exclusively, characters without a trace of the tiny lines and wrinkles that begin to appear around, say, age 32.

Television advertisers want young audiences, it seems, so programs that skew young command higher advertising rates. The theory goes something like this: Old people read magazines and newspapers, they watch the news channels and listen to the radio—and that makes finding them a lot easier and therefore cheaper. Young people, on the other hand, spend a great deal of time listening to depressing music and doing alarming things to their hair, not reading magazines and definitely not bothering with the newspaper, so when you get one trapped in front of a television set, grab him. Their feckless indolence makes them worth more, perversely. The poor over-40 set, with their good jobs and sense of civic responsibility, are a dime a dozen.

Last season, my writing partner, Dan Staley, and I had a series on one of the large broadcast networks. Our two stars, in an act of purely contrarian bloody-mindedness, were in their sixties. In other words, the combined age of our two lead actors was roughly that of all six "Friends" combined. Our audience was respectably large, but unrespectably old. The people who watched our show all had jobs and mortgages and expenses—in other words, were useless.

"Hey, you guys were cancelled?" People older than 40 would ask that question, and I always dreaded giving the answer. "But why?" they would ask. "I LOVED that show."

And then I would be forced to say that while we had a great many viewers, their average age was 40-plus, which made them unimportant to advertisers and, consequently, to network executives. And then the color would drain out of the face of the person I was talking to, and he would stammer and cough in the half-rage, half-sadness appropriate to someone who had just been told that his *entire life*, its needs, triumphs, accomplishments, and meaning, had just been rendered *undesirable*.

And I'd be glad to still be in my thirties. Although in Hollywood, even 33 is getting up there.

I am out having a beer with my plastic-surgeon friend. He has a booming Beverly Hills practice and always has great stories, mostly about liposuction and breast augmentation. Most of his patients are involved in the entertainment industry and come to him for simple nips and tucks here and there—to be what he calls "refreshed." He is talking about one of his new patients, a well-known young actress. He won't tell me her name.

"She is absolutely beautiful," he says. "She has a perfect body."

"Who is it?" I want to know.

He shakes his head. "Can't say. Patient confidentiality."

"What does she want done?"

"Her neck," he answers. "Every other part of her is perfect."

"Her neck? What was wrong with her neck?"

"Nothing, really. A little loose. Some diminished tautness. Nothing major," he says. "But the neck is tricky. You can't really wait until it sags and completely loses its elasticity. You have to adjust it a little bit every year or so. Take it in an inch now and then. You can't put the neck off, like the chin or the forehead. Gotta start early."

"How old is she?"

"That's the problem. She's 28. She waited way too long. Should've come to me four years ago."

I laugh and shake my head. To be 28 and worried about

Mr. Long, a Hollywood writer, writes NR's "Letter from Al" column.

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your neck! I take a sip of my beer and look at my reflection in the mirror at the back of the bar. I think I look okay. Not great, but okay. I lift my chin and tilt my head back to get a good look at my neck. My friend watches me do this.

He clears his throat. "You know," he says, "you'd be surprised how many of my patients are men. It's considered totally acceptable for a guy to want to get a little work done."

I scoff.

"I'm serious," he says. He mentions the name of a young actor in a hugely popular sitcom. "He came to me for a simple nose-job and left with a chin implant, an ear bob, and a male breast aug."

■

'Who are you?' I ask. 'The devil?'

My friend laughs. 'Nope. Just a plastic surgeon in Beverly Hills.'

■

"You gave him breasts?" I ask, laughing.

"I gave him *pectorals*," he says. "I turned him into a romantic lead. Before me, he was strictly character roles."

"Forget it," I say. "I'm not an actor and I'm not paying you $25,000 to stretch my neck."

"Don't flatter yourself. The neck is the least of your problems. For you, I'd recommend an eye tuck, a forehead lift, a chin implant, a jaw shape, and some lipo around the jowls *before* we even think about the neck."

"Forget it," I say. "I'm going to let myself deteriorate naturally."

"Try this," he says.

He puts my hands together, as if in prayer. He tucks my thumbs under my chin and places my two index fingers against my nose.

"Now," he says, "leaving your thumbs touching, open your hands up, like you're trying to smooth out your face. Pull back gently."

I do it.

"Now, hold," he says. "And look in the mirror."

I do. I see a tight, wrinkle-free face. I see a pronounced jawline. I see the familiar face-lift perpetual smile. I see myself, refreshed. "Forget it," I say, still holding back my face.

"Suit yourself," he says, finishing the rest of his beer.

I drop my face and do the same. We pay for our drinks and walk to our cars.

"Tonight," he says, ominously, "you'll brush your teeth and look at yourself in the mirror, and you'll think, 'Hey, I don't look bad.' And later this week, maybe in the morning after you've shaved, you'll chuckle to yourself and do the thumbs-under-the-chin trick, just for a laugh. But you'll start to notice all the little droops and sags. The folds of skin that suddenly appear. The creases where nothing should crease. And then maybe you'll hear about a couple of young writers, guys in their early twenties, who are suddenly hot. And the years will start running together in your memory and teenaged boys will start calling you 'sir' and the gray hairs will start sprouting and every single morning you'll tuck your thumbs under your chin, 'just to see,' you'll tell yourself. And then one day you'll be in my office."

I stare into the night, car keys still dangling in my hand.

"Who are you?" I ask. "The devil?"

My friend laughs. "Nope. Just a plastic surgeon in Beverly Hills." He gets into his new Mercedes and speeds away. How many "breast augs" does it take to buy that car? How many chin lifts for the Chevy Blazer, his other car? How many "refreshers" for the two weeks in Vail? I'll let myself turn into a raisin before I'll give him one penny, I think to myself.

Nobody is retiring on my neck.

A year or two ago, during a casting session, I ran into a former high-school classmate. I had just stepped out to refill my coffee, and there she was: still ravishing, sitting with a dozen or so other actresses, ready to audition for me, my producing partner, and our casting staff.

"Hey!" I shouted.

"Hey!" she shouted back.

We gave each other a little squeeze and a peck on the cheek. I remembered her as a beautiful girl, and here she was, in my office, a beautiful woman. "How long has it been?" I asked, and as I started to mentally calculate the intervening years, I felt her hand close tightly around my wrist. "Do you have a sec?" she asked.

I walked with her to the coffee machine. She whispered frantically. "See, I play 23, 24, okay?"

"Excuse me?"

"I'm 24. Twenty-five at the max."

"But we were in the same high-school class," I said, still not getting it.

She looked at me for a moment, eyes wide and fierce, like she was trying to drill her meaning into my head.

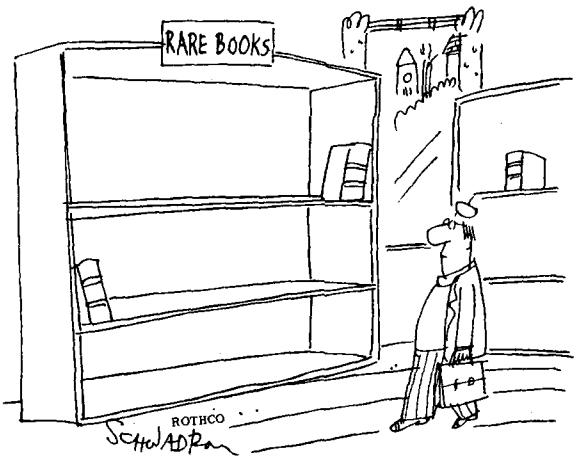
"Oh," I said, finally getting it. "OH."

"It's just, you know, the *business*," she said.

"Should I pretend not to know you?"

She put her hand on my shoulder and shook her head in pity. "No," she said, "you can say you know me. But I'd appreciate it if you said that you were *better* friends with my older sister."

I didn't even have time to spin some filthy casting-couch fantasies. I was shunted off into an undesirable demographic. I'm too old, even for people my own age. **NR**



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THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON, D.C.

January 3, 1999

Dear Rusty,

Technically, as you know, I'm a member of the Senate. One of the jobs of the vice president, is to serve as a tie-breaker there. So if there's a trial, and it ends in a tie, I get to cast the deciding vote.

This was brought to my attention by Tipper, who circled the relevant passages in her copy of the "Pocket Constitution" (something she's taken to carrying around and flipping through at totally inappropriate times).

Like when the congressional Democrats took that bus over to the White House, right after the impeachment vote. We were all supposed to be standing around, drinking coffee, and generally rallying 'round the president. As we waited for them to arrive, Tipper just sat on one of the Roosevelt wing chairs, glumly paging through her "Pocket Constitution."

"It says here in the Federalist Papers," she said to no one in particular, "that 'other high crimes and misdemeanors' include bribery. So aren't bribery and perjury sort of on par?"

Bill looked at her strangely, then back at me. I checked my watch. "Wonder where they are," I said. "That bus should have been here by now."

"Maybe it was a city bus," Tipper said without looking up.

Later, when everyone had gathered for the big photo op, a reporter announced that the latest poll numbers had come in, and that Bill was still hugely popular.

I squeezed Tipper in a sideways hug. "Maybe this is all over," I said to her quietly, still smiling for the cameras.

"That's not what Drudge says," she whispered.

"Drudge? Tipper, are you nuts?"

She smiled to the cameras, and through clenched teeth she muttered, "He was right about the dress."

Later, in the car, I let her have it.

"Tipper," I said, "we're all supposed to be rallying 'round the president, so I'd appreciate it if you'd do your duty and rally 'round. No more Drudge, no more love child, and absolutely no more 'Pocket Constitution,' okay?"

"You can't keep protecting him, Al. You've got to put some daylight between the two of you. Just leak something innocuous at first, just to see what the reaction is. Something like, I don't know, 'sources close to the vice president say that he is growing increasingly uncomfortable with his role as Clinton apologist.'"

"Tipper!" I cried. "Good Lord! I don't like that."

"Too late," she answered. "The 'source close to the vice president' has already talked to Andrea Mitchell and Margaret Carlson."

"You didn't!" I said in disbelief.

"I did!" she shouted. "Al, you need to make a stand. You need to reclaim your good name."

"Well, maybe not!" I shouted back. "Maybe they'll have to take a DNA sample from ME and maybe it'll turn out that I have a love child somewhere from . . . from . . . from . . . "

But Tipper was laughing so hard she couldn't hear me. I was so angry I ripped up her copy of the "Pocket Constitution." But she just laughed.

What am I going to do, Rusty? I'm not good enough to be a Bill Bradley, and I'm not bad enough to be a Bill Clinton. I've got about nine months to become very very bad or very very good before the New Hampshire primary. I've been in politics a long time. Voters like clarity. They don't go for that middle-of-the-road stuff. The way I figure it, I either give back all that soft money and publicly ask the president to resign, or I take more money from the Chinese and drum up a love child PDQ. What do you think?

Your pal, Al

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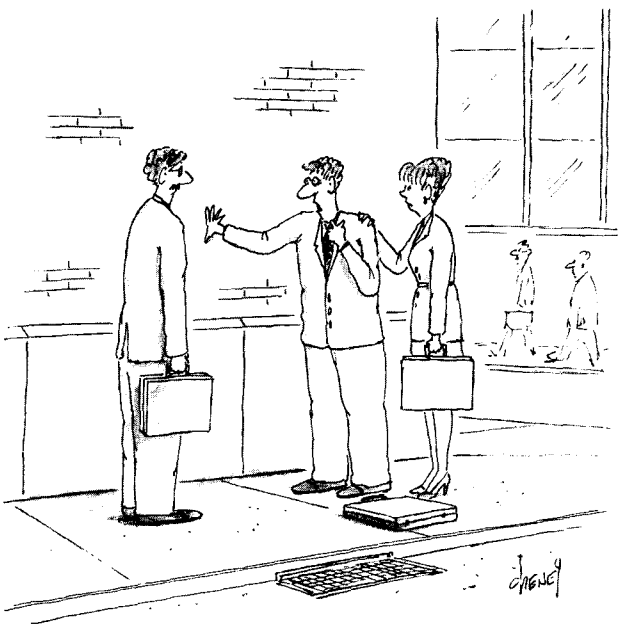
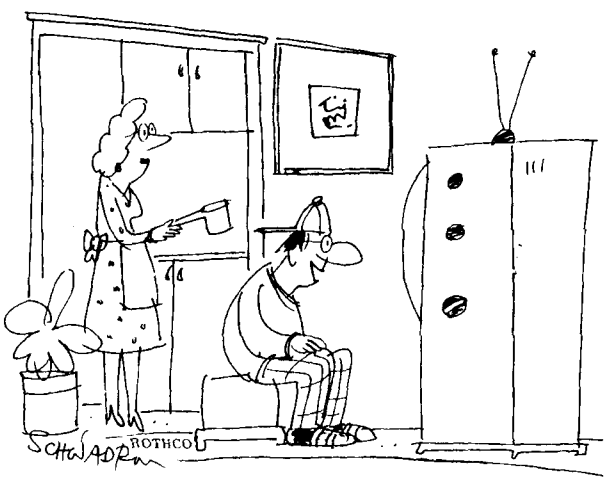
Matt—Rothco

"And this is a picture of the schools' inspector painted by our headmaster."

"You are a great Samaritan!"



"Really, I'm fine . . . just a momentary sensation of accountability. I'm sure it will pass."



"Joe Camel is back. He's got a book deal, and he's telling all in an interview with Oprah."

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In All, Modesty

FLORENCE KING

A Return to Modesty: Discovering the Lost Virtue, by Wendy Shalit (Free Press, 291 pp., $24)

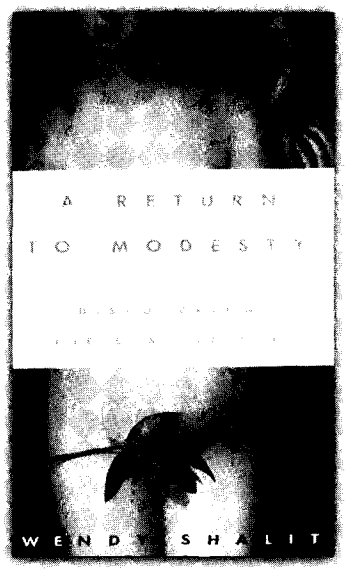
No different drummer can keep up with Wendy Shalit. When they drop in their tracks from exhaustion she just gets another one and marches on. She's been her own woman since becoming a sex-ed dropout in fourth grade, and on through her cantankerous four years at Williams College, where she raised a lone voice against coed bathrooms and compounded her political incorrectness by publishing a polemic against the practice in *Commentary* that left her conformist classmates reeling in shock.

Since then her name has become the byline that connoisseurs of well-written unconventional wisdom look for, turning up in *City Journal*, where she is a contributing editor, as well as the *Wall Street Journal* and NATIONAL REVIEW—but not *Cosmopolitan*, for reasons which will shortly become clear.

Now just 23, she has published her first book. *A Return to Modesty* is about women, and so uncompromising in voice and stance that one is tempted to think of its author as Simone de Shalit or Wendy Wollstonecraft, but make no mistake: she imitates nothing and no one, and her roast of the sacred cow of female sexual freedom is going to stampede our nation of sheep and hand liberals their heads on a platter.

She blames the death of modesty on feminists, who claimed that modesty was "invented" by men to enslave and subordinate women. Show the least sign of modesty, feminists warned, and men will no longer take you seriously. Worse, modesty suppressed female desire. The media latched onto this and a cultural icon was born: the woman without hang-ups who traded being good for being good in bed, and abandoned her search for Mr. Right for what *Cosmo* called "undifferentiated lust" with lots of Mr. Right Nows.

We went from a nation that believed a virtuous woman's price is far above rubies to one that believes a virtuous woman is as sounding brass. Meanwhile, the New Woman went from prize to prey. Without the social conventions of modesty, her prerogative to say no was overridden by men's prerogative to expect sex.



Today's young women are profoundly unhappy, Shalit maintains, so desperate for a revival of modesty that they practice today's ersatz versions of it—sexual-harassment suits, date-rape-awareness vigils, and "No Means No" protest marches to remind men that women don't feel undifferentiated lust.

Another substitute is eating disorders. Since women make up 90 percent of anorexics and bulimics, starving and throwing up are ways to establish a clear difference between the sexes in a culture that insists there aren't any.

Shalit thinks we have arrived at the critical point noted by Rousseau in his warning against women trying to be like men: "The more women want to resemble them, the less women will govern them, and then men will truly be the masters."

The disappearance of modesty has increased misogyny and violence against women. When men were taught that "A woman is more particular" about whom she sleeps with, they could be philosophical about sexual rejection. But now, encouraged by ringing endorsements of undifferentiated lust to think that women are just like them, they are much more likely to be impatient and uncomprehending when a woman says no to sex. "Modesty gave men a frame of reference for a woman's 'no'—without it, the modern man always takes no as a personal rebuke. . . . Failure to sleep with someone is now an act of hostility."

Modesty also improves the quality of life in general. When men believed they had to make themselves worthy of a woman, admonitions such as "Lips that touch liquor shall never touch mine" carried real weight, because "what women will and will not permit does have a profound way of influencing an entire society."

> Women can't tell men how to behave—they either inspire or fail to inspire. Today we inspire them by slamming doors on their fingers, pushing them away when they help us with our coats, and then, when they learn their lesson and begin to treat us with equal-opportunity boorishness, we change our minds and seek to enforce by fiat the respect which was once grounded in custom.

Is modesty natural? Shalit contends that it is and offers four proofs.

1) The universal propensity of pubescent girls to be embarrassed by everything under the sun, as witnessed by their constant moans of "I could die! I could just die!"

2) The universal windy-day gesture: Women might wear slit skirts because it's the fashion, but let the slightest breeze come along and they automatically hold the slit closed to cover what it was designed to reveal.

3) The "Not That Way" freeze and sudden retreat: the involuntary prudish-

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ness that comes over a woman when an obtuse man, thinking to compliment her, says something like, "You'd make a great porn star."

4) The body-noises divide: Men, the blithe spirits, take them in stride, but to women they are mortifying. (A *Mademoiselle* advice columnist writes that a great many of the letters she gets are some version of "What do I do when my boyfriend starts burping?")

If modesty is natural, then, can it be a virtue? Here Shalit displays her gift for making intellectual points in conversational language by starting—and winning—an argument with Immanuel Kant. The German philosopher believed that since modesty flows from woman's

■

'Within a certain circle of women, incidents of chivalry are now traded like sightings of aliens or solar eclipses.'

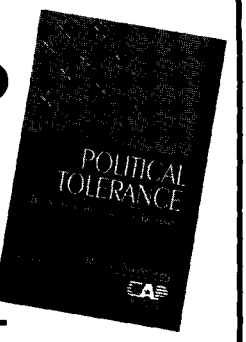
■

natural circumstances, and is not the result of a rational struggle, it can't qualify as moral. Shalit agrees that the fashion slave who wears a slit skirt and instinctively clutches it against the wind is morally neutral, but what of the woman who refuses to wear slit skirts in the first place? "In Kantian terms, then, a woman who struggles with her culture and opts for modesty would, in fact, seem to be acting virtuously."

Shalit confides that her friends have warned her that when this book comes out she will be mercilessly attacked and mocked by the forces of sexual equality. What will no doubt enrage them the most is her call for a return to the "cartel of virtue"—that time-honored female instinct wherein women made a silent pact to behave themselves in the interests of group and society to ensure that men would have to marry. In other words, cut off the free milk and make him buy the cow.

To help gird her for the coming combat with apoplectic feminists, let me offer that I well remember the heyday of the cartel of virtue in the 1950s. It can be brutal, especially the way it encourages virtuous women to gang up on their erring sisters, but it is far less brutal than

"Prepare To Rethink!"



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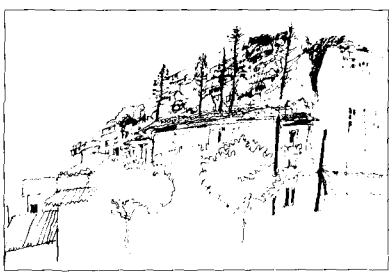
turning all women into erring sisters as happens under our present system of sexual mayhem. In any case, the cartel of virtue is the only known way to get women to stick together, so tell the feminists to think of it as sisterhood.

Shalit sees signs that modesty is making a comeback. Antioch College's much-derided guidelines on asking permission to kiss and touch are not very different from *The English Gentlewoman* (1631) and the many Victorian chapbooks about men who "take liberties."

There is movement on the "Quietly Confessed" front—Shalit's name for the paragraph in "balanced" news stories about coed dorms, in which a lone girl who objects to the arrangement is quoted under the attributive, "she quietly confessed." After Shalit's *Commentary* article was reprinted in *Reader's Digest* she was inundated with supportive letters from such girls.

Sexual differences are beginning to be acknowledged in reports of new hormone discoveries (e.g., oxytocin, released by the female during sex and thought to make women cling emotionally to the men they sleep with).



Women have begun to swap stories about the rare man who gave up his seat on a bus or tipped his hat—or as Shalit puts it, in what may be the best line in the book: "Within a certain circle of women, incidents of chivalry are now traded like sightings of aliens or solar eclipses."

The growing interest in rigid social strictures manifested by the Jane Austen craze tells her that young women are pining for interference as their mothers once pined for liberation, even to the extent of wanting to be nagged and called on the carpet.

Of herself she admits, "I'm always pining for someone to young-lady me," but she doesn't need it, at least from a reviewer's standpoint. Her ability to think things through in her own way and come to her own conclusions makes every page of this book wise, fresh, and funny, sparkling with her special brand of astringent charm. If she can write like this at 23, her future output can only be contemplated with pure joy. **NR**

The Spying Game

PETER W. RODMAN

The Haunted Wood: Soviet Espionage in America—The Stalin Era, by Allen Weinstein and Alexander Vassiliev (Random House, 382 pp., $30)

INUNDATED by new Cold War scholarship based on liberated Soviet-bloc archives, the informed reader is entitled to ask what each new example of the genre adds that is truly interesting. Yale University Press is sponsoring a series of books on such topics as Soviet manipulation of the American Communist Party, and the Woodrow Wilson Center's Cold War International History Project has provided continuing revelations on Soviet foreign policy. What Allen Weinstein and Alexander Vassiliev have to offer here that is truly extraordinary is their unprecedented (and probably never to be repeated) access to NKVD (now KGB) files.

Weinstein is a brilliant historian whose masterwork is *Perjury*, the definitive account of the Hiss–Chambers case, and who now heads the Center for Democracy. His pro-democracy activism made him a close associate of Russian reformers in the early 1990s. These associations enabled him to persuade reform-minded officials in the Russian intelligence services in 1993 to open up their files. (The window closed abruptly in 1995.) His co-author, Vassiliev, is a retired Soviet intelligence official turned journalist. Their book also benefited from the CIA's release in 1995–96 of thousands of intercepted NKVD messages between the U.S. and Moscow during World War II (the VENONA cables)—and they have been able to match up dozens of the CIA's transcripts (sometimes incomplete) with the NKVD originals.

Mr. Rodman, an NR senior editor, is director of national-security programs at the Nixon Center.

These unique records tell the inside story of the espionage networks that Moscow created in the United States, especially after Franklin Roosevelt's establishment of diplomatic relations with the USSR in 1934. From then until 1945, the Soviets amassed a great volume of information from agents and sources in a range of U.S. government agencies, from the State, Treasury, and Justice Departments to the War Production Board and the U.S. Army Signal Security Agency (precursor of the National Security Agency)—even in the Office of Strategic Services, the predecessor of the CIA. The information

If the Soviets in the 1950s could not match their earlier successes in espionage, it was not for lack of trying.

included diplomatic secrets and planning for the postwar period (particularly policy toward Germany and the USSR), U.S. industrial and military production, and, of course, the atom-bomb project.

The usual cast of characters is here, their espionage traced in excruciating detail in the messages to and from Moscow, erasing any lingering doubt in the minds of any but the most obtuse or willful—Julius and Ethel Rosenberg (*Julius being the leader of a Party cell* collecting scientific information on the atom bomb); Nathan Gregory Silvermaster (leader of a group of agents in the Treasury Department); Harry Dexter White (a senior Treasury official in the Silvermaster group); Klaus Fuchs (the key Soviet agent in the atom-bomb project); Lauchlin Currie (an aide to FDR and a source for the New York espionage station in the 1940s); and others. Henry A. Wallace, then Truman's commerce secretary, makes a brief and embarrassing appearance, confiding to the Soviet intelligence chief in Washington in 1945 the Truman administration's plans to maintain U.S. military control over nuclear energy, and his own disagreements with that policy.

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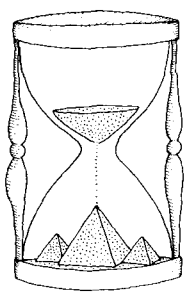
Alger Hiss is not a major figure in the book—mainly because he was a source for Soviet military intelligence (GRU), a rival agency. But Hiss is the subject of an amusing flurry of NKVD cables in 1936, when he tried to recruit a State Department colleague (Noel Field) for the GRU, only to be delicately told that he (Field) was already working for the NKVD. But Hiss wouldn't let up, alarming higher-ups in both organizations who were concerned not only about bureaucratic turf but about the risk of security breaches if this kind of meddling persisted.

There are other screw-ups, and much evidence in the messages that Soviet intelligence was never immune to bureaucratic incompetence or wackiness. During the Hiss–Chambers affair in 1948, the Soviet intelligence chief in Washington came up with the bright idea of spreading disinformation that Whittaker Chambers was a former Gestapo agent. Moscow demurred, in part because of the demoralization it might spread among loyal agents whom Chambers had recruited when he was working for Moscow.

In fact, by the end of World War II, the Soviet spy network in the United States was in bad shape. Its eager recruits in the 1930s and '40s had been ideologically motivated, bewitched by the utopian claims of Communism during the Depression and the rise of Nazism. With Nazism defeated, the world economy recovering, and Stalin's Cold War beginning, there were few new recruits. Indeed, major defections—notably those of Igor Gouzenko, Chambers, and Elizabeth Bentley—enabled the FBI to start breaking up the spy rings. Klaus Fuchs was caught and confessed, which led to the Rosenbergs. Weinstein and Vassiliev refer to 1933–45 as Soviet espionage's "golden age." Thereafter, there was no real American Communist underground anymore, despite Moscow's determined efforts to rebuild one.



Weinstein and Vassiliev therefore condemn the "Red Scare" of the late 1940s and early '50s not only for its excesses but for its untimeliness: the country was hysterical about espionage just as the problem dissipated. Excesses there were, but it is quite a lot to ask of a democracy that it suppress its alarm upon learning the extent of the espionage and treason of which it has lately been the victim. The big spy stories, after all, were all true. And if the Soviets in the 1950s couldn't match their earlier successes, it was not for lack of trying.

In any case, *The Haunted Wood* deserves an honored place in the literature. **NR**

San Diego

JOHN J. MILLER

Dreaming with His Eyes Open: A Life of Diego Rivera, by Patrick Marnham (Knopf, 350 pp., $35)

Diego Rivera: A Retrospective, by Linda Downs (Norton, 372 pp., $85)

THE workmen started swinging their axes at midnight. Within a few hours, they had demolished Diego Rivera's mural in the lobby of the RCA Building at Rockefeller Center, initiating one of the most notorious scandals in the history of American art.

Less than a year earlier, in 1933, Rivera had come to New York City at the suggestion of Nelson Rockefeller. But his work-in-progress had departed significantly from the agreed-upon design; Rivera, a Communist, had infused it with images depicting capitalism as evil and Marxism as society's salvation. When managers inspecting the site spotted a picture of Lenin, they ordered the artist to halt. For months the mural remained unfinished, the center of controversy. A last-minute effort to have it dismantled and shipped to the Museum of Modern Art collapsed. Finally, it was destroyed.

As Patrick Marnham reminds us in this intriguing biography, if Rivera had managed to prevent his politics from subsuming his art, he might have gone on to decorate dozens of important buildings in the United States. Shortly before the Rockefeller fiasco, he had

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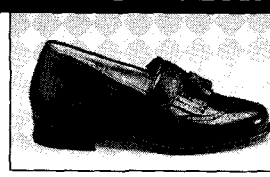

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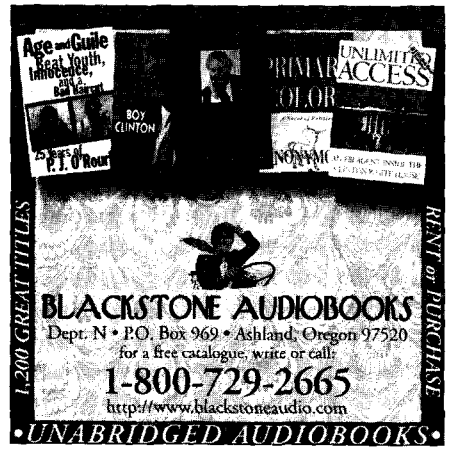

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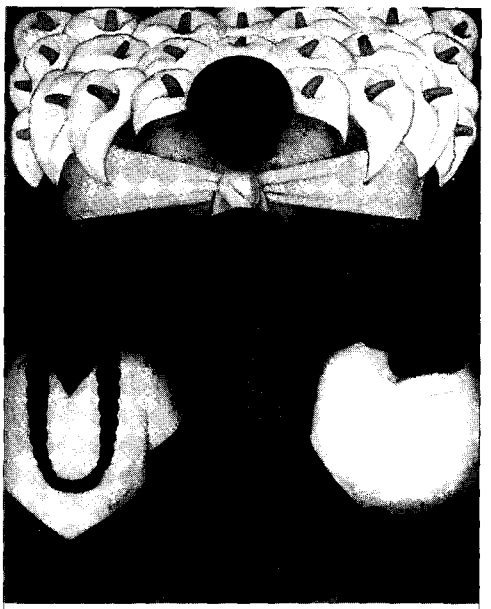
completed murals at the Pacific Stock Exchange in San Francisco and in the Garden Court at the Detroit Institute of Arts. After it, a deal for a mural at the General Motors Building in Chicago was abruptly cancelled. Rivera retreated to his native Mexico, where he had established his reputation as the world's foremost muralist.

Rivera was born in 1886, the product of Mexico's mestizo melting pot; his ancestors made him part Spanish, Indian, African, Italian, Jewish, Russian, and Portuguese. He showed an early aptitude for drawing. At age nine, writes Marnham, "he executed a pencil sketch of his mother that was so unflatteringly accurate that she told him never to draw her again."

After a frustrating stint in Europe, Rivera returned to Mexico in 1920 and found his muse among the people of his native land. Stylistically, he combined Italian-Renaissance frescoing, pre-Colombian images, and Cubist spacing to create a distinctly Mexican aesthetic. His subjects were at times glaringly political, but his finest works overcame this tendency, celebrating the ordinary lives of everyday people. Marnham describes this well, but his book contains only a few dozen examples of Rivera's work. A better source is Linda Downs's newly reissued *Diego Rivera: A Retrospective*, which includes two hundred color plates.

Marnham does provide a fascinating description of the challenges Rivera faced in producing his grand murals. The artist had to work with certainty and speed, painting over damp coats of plaster as they dried, knowing that colors would fade overnight yet having to match them to the previous day's work. Owing to chemical reaction, the colors themselves fused to the wall. A mistake required cutting away a section of the wall and starting over.

Rivera was well suited to this demanding medium, producing works at once physically awesome and intellectually engaging. "If medieval art was the Bible of the Illiterate, Rivera's frescoes are the *Kapital* of the Illiterate," wrote one critic. Unfortunately, Marnham fails to explain his subject's contradictory relationship with Communism. Rivera never read deeply into Marx or Lenin, nor did he refuse commissions from leading American industrialists.



Diego Rivera, *Flower Day* (1925)

One such commission led to the Detroit project, widely regarded as his masterpiece, which portrays a Ford assembly line. His two principal murals there, each 800 square feet, are glorious representations of human and mechanical energies converging in production—a Depression-era homage to America's work ethic and economic power. One panel managed to spark outrage from religious leaders for apparently showing the Christ child receiving a vaccination.

What sort of man was Rivera? The first thing people noticed about him, writes Marnham, was neither his art nor his ideology but his sheer size. He sometimes weighed as much as 300 pounds. He also rarely bathed. "Is this the great Diego Rivera?" asked Lupe Marin at their first meeting. "He looks horrible to me." Even so, she later married Rivera—one of five women who did. Marriage meant little to the artist. Rivera was a true lecher, and he twice abandoned wives who had just given birth to his children.

With Rivera, sex frequently intersected with politics. Not long after returning to Mexico, he joined the Trotskyite International Communist League. When Trotsky himself faced expulsion from Norway in 1936, Rivera petitioned Mexican president Lázaro Cárdenas to grant asylum to the one-time Russian revolutionary. In early 1937, Trotsky and his wife arrived in Veracruz. Soon they were living under Rivera's roof. Trotsky knew Stalin wanted him dead, but he remained safe as long as he stayed with Rivera. The guest, however, betrayed his host. He made the fatal mistake of having an affair with Rivera's wife at the time, Frida Kahlo—an artist vastly overrated today by feminist advocates. While Rivera had tolerated some of Kahlo's previous flings, especially when they involved women, he became incensed at this one and ejected Trotsky from his home. In 1940, a Soviet agent in Mexico killed Trotsky with an ice pick.

By then Rivera's greatest accomplishments were behind him. In 1957, he suffered a stroke that left him unable to use his right arm. Rivera continued to paint, but two months later succumbed permanently when his heart failed. Before Marnham's biography and the Linda Downs retrospective, there were few reliable sources about Rivera in print. Their publication will guarantee his continuing—and deserved—popularity. **NR**

Lonesome Dove

JOHN HILLEN

Fortress America: The American Military and the Consequences of Peace, by William Greider (Public Affairs, 202 pp., $22)

IT is hard to see how a conservative could find much to admire in any of William Greider's books, but one can appreciate his comforting predictability. Greider, the dean of *Rolling Stone*'s crew of aging gadflies, long ago found his shtick and he sticks to it in this most recent effort.

Greider writes books on big subjects and complex systems—democracy and

Mr. Hillen, an NR contributing editor, is a senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, and the author of *Future Visions for U.S. Defense Policy* (CSIS).

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capitalism, the Federal Reserve, the global economy, the U.S. military. We learn that the American people are deeply vested in each of these, but cannot possibly understand all of their intricacies. Greider aims not only to "explain" these systems, but to indict them as manipulative, self-serving, secretive, and ultimately bad for your average Joe and America in general. Greider is a liberal populist and an intelligent writer, an erudite Michael Moore without the camera.

His newest offering is an occasionally on-target diatribe against the U.S. defense industry sandwiched between some reasonable reflections on the state of national-security policy and the American role in the world's strategic affairs. As in his previous books, Greider describes his subject clearly, if in a rather paranoid and conspiratorial way.

The While House has seen fit to cut the defense budget drastically while trying to act as global emperor.

He is thoughtful in analyzing the Defense Department's identity crisis: what it wants to be now that the Cold War is over. Over the past five years, the White House has seen fit to cut the defense budget drastically while trying to act as global emperor. The result is an underfunded, worn-down, and worn-out military trying simultaneously to carry out three different tasks. These are, in the words of official Pentagon strategic documents, to "shape" the present security environment, "respond" to possible threats from Iraq, North Korea, et al., and "prepare" for a very different military future. The Clinton administration has chosen to be merely fair at all three while seeking to be the world's "indispensable power" on the cheap. On the whole, it is a policy that is strategically and economically unsustainable.

Greider's prescriptions vis-à-vis America's post-Cold War military posture are less convincing—think Marin County hot tub circa 1971. He sees a grand conspiracy between an international economic order on which U.S. prosperity depends and an imperial military overstretched in maintaining that order. Greider offers a way out of what national-security analysts call "the defense train wreck." Cut the size of our armed forces and their budgets, disarm to a certain degree, do more through the United Nations, etc.

At least give him credit for being an honest isolationist. Most of Greider's liberal compatriots have undergone an ornithological miracle, transforming themselves from Cold War doves to New World Order hawks, never seeing a post-Cold War intervention they don't want to undertake. Implementing Greider's disarmament plan would derail their schemes and force the U.S. to make something like Britain's 1970 East of Suez decision, dividing the world into the part it can influence and the part it must ignore. That prospect horrifies the new-breed liberal. For his part, Greider is right that ultimately defense spending and military posture are "about national vision and the limits of empire." By way of "vision," however, the best he can himself offer is fluffy thoughts that "Americans might move to higher ground and dream of a common humanity" and that "in this new age, we [the world] are all riding in the same boat." America ought to take its chances with its own rusting sword rather than rely on the promise of a communal plow. **NR**

■ THEATER ■

The Bottom Line

ROD DREHER

THE hottest ticket currently on Broadway is *The Blue Room*, or as it is more colloquially known, "That Nicole-Kidman-Gets-Butt-Naked Play." She really does get naked, though very briefly, and all we see is her well-toned haunches. And truth to tell, Mrs. Tom Cruise is probably in a flesh-colored body stocking. Caveat emptor, babe.

Still, the prospect of seeing a Hollywood starlet's rear end in the flesh tells

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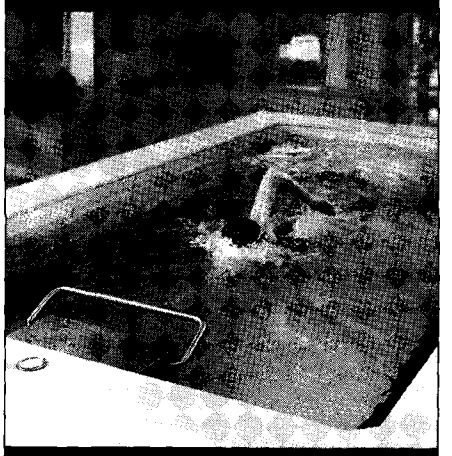

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you everything you need to know about why the $35 tickets for the production's limited three-month run can be had only from a ticket broker asking $300 a pop—if they can be had at all. It doesn't hurt, of course, that word has gotten out that the play is all about S-E-X. Every article about it has included a panting London *Daily Telegraph* reviewer's description of Miss Kidman as "pure theatrical Viagra." Well, golly.

Unfortunately, as with so much contemporary sex, all the pleasure of the play is in the anticipation. Though only a blind man or a eunuch could fail to appreciate the, um, artfulness of Miss Kidman's sculpted form, *The Blue Room* is pure theatrical saltpeter. There's a good philosophical reason for that, one that explains not only the crazed clamor for *Blue Room* tickets, but also why this dreary, vapid, airless evening of theater is such a depressingly accurate reflection of our time.

■

Despite Nicole Kidman, *The Blue Room* is pure theatrical saltpeter.

■

The celebrated English playwright David Hare loosely adapted *The Blue Room* from Arthur Schnitzler's *Riegen*, later known more widely as *La Ronde*, thanks to Max Ophuls's 1950 film. The Hare version is a series of vignettes: each features a man and a woman who, at some point during the scene, have sex (the lights go dark at the moment of impact, we hear an electric crackle, and are told how long the blessed event lasts). Miss Kidman and the English stage actor Iain Glen each play five very different roles; the gimmick here is that one canoodler remains onstage to appear in the scene that follows, while the other leaves, returning as a different person. In time, all ten characters form a sexual daisy chain that links men and women of diverse classes, temperaments, ages, and levels of experience.

It's easy to imagine what a shock these vignettes must have delivered to Schnitzler's cultured audiences in 1920s Vienna, but at this late date in the sexual revolution, especially after the year-long Lewinskian Thermidor, it's all very old hat. Been there, done that, saw it on C-SPAN.

In fact, our inability to be moved one way or the other by the hard-panting goings-on in *The Blue Room* is, intentionally or not, part of its point. The play is about sex in general and lust in particular. Lust—its power, its persistence, and its ability to desiccate the human heart. The cab driver couples furtively with the hooker on the quai, then has a quickie with the au pair in a back room; the au pair seduces a nervous student, who later tangles with a married lover, and so forth.

Nobody is satisfied. Yet they stagger onward from assignation to assignation, in search of a kind of fulfillment and transcendence that, paradoxically, their concupiscent prowling guarantees they will never find. Sex is depicted here as a power struggle fraught with confusion and conflicting expectations, each man's or woman's identity reduced to a poker face used to bluff for advantage in a high-stakes game. By evening's end, the quantity and variety of erotic permutations have emptied sex of any meaning, and Miss Kidman and Mr. Glen wear only the depressing anonymity of porn actors. They might as well be blowing their noses or brushing their teeth.

This, no doubt, disappoints audience members eager to play Peeping Tom for a few hours, but it makes perfect sense. The "blue" in the title—it comes from a song with which a Glen character serenades his sweetie—laments the loneliness and futility of this kind of self-gratifying sex, the only kind we ever see in the play. These characters are in deep philosophical crisis, but only one, a bored aristocrat who makes his appearance late in the play, seems the slightest bit aware of it.

"My life is a search for a love that stays real," he sighs to his actress lover.

"Are you saying nothing is worth doing because nothing ends well?" she later replies. "This way, at least we're alive."

I screw, therefore I am. Sex is certainly an ignoble basis for a metaphysics, but who can deny that it's the one most people these days seem to swear by? When a society becomes unmoored from traditional religious belief or moral idealism, and in the absence of social stigma as an external reinforcement of inwardly held virtue, it is no surprise that the sex instinct will assert its rule as if by divine right. And a society in which the cheap thrills of celebrity and quickie sex are sovereign is a society willing to pay anything for the chance to see a famous actress's rear end in shallow, pseudo-highbrow erotica—which can't even boast of a positive review in the *Times*.

Yet the play is so thinly developed that this point seems to be lost on the Broadway crowd. In the throng outside the Cort Theatre after the performance, an audience member, clearly a tourist, was asked by friends who hadn't seen the play what it was about. The man tried a couple of muddle-headed explanations, then admitted that, aside from something to do with sex and Nicole Kidman's tuchus, he hadn't the faintest idea.

Which didn't mean he thought the money he'd spent on the most sought-after tickets on Broadway was wasted. "Sometimes," he cheerily declared, "it's just great to see stars!" **NR**

Mr. Dreher is chief film critic for the *New York Post*.

■ **RELIGION** ■

Moses Unplugged

DAVID KLINGHOFFER

Bill Clinton, Kenneth Starr, Bill Gates, Michael Jordan, Steven Spielberg, Robin Williams, Madonna, Oprah Winfrey, Moses.

Moses? Strange to report, in the winter of 1998 the ranks of America's most glittering public figures were briefly joined by a man who never told a joke, never handled a basketball, nor went on television, and who claimed he took dictation from God Almighty. Moses was a spiritual leader, and "spirituality"

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is held in high regard today. But what we mean by that word—cozy blather as a consumer good—would have filled him with rage. He raged a lot, especially in the fierce farewell speech on the Plains of Moab recorded in Deuteronomy. Were that discourse to be published today, it would be denounced as intolerant and uncaring.

Yet along comes *The Prince of Egypt*, an admiring cartoon about the first two-thirds of his life. Shortly before the movie opened last month on 3,000 movie screens worldwide, Moses appeared on the cover of *Time* and provided the subject matter of a disquisition in *The New Yorker*. In numerous feature articles elsewhere, biblical experts were interviewed about all aspects of his legacy, not least the question of whether he really existed. One new book was repeatedly quoted, *Moses: A Life*, a kind of celebrity biography by journalist Jonathan Kirsch. How do we account for the circumstance of Moses' being for a few weeks bigger than Larry King and Jerry Springer combined?

Actually the film deserved all this adulation. *The Prince of Egypt* gives you chills about every 15 minutes. It's gorgeous to look at, especially when illustrating the sinister loveliness of royal Egyptian architecture. The songs are lusty and memorable, the characters artfully portrayed and voiced: Val Kilmer as Moses, Michelle Pfeiffer as his wife Tzipporah, Ralph Fiennes as the pharaoh Ramses.

Certain thrilling moments haunt you after you leave the theater. There's the encounter with God at the burning bush, His whispering voice half-compassionate and half-menacing; and the escape through the Sea of Reeds, with the shadows of great fishes seen swimming in the towering walls of water on either side of the fleeing Israelites.

Moses and Tzipporah, from *The Prince of Egypt*. (DreamWorks Pictures)

The parting of the sea marks the climax of the film, the Egyptian chariots sinking under the waves as the Israelites shout hymns of joy for their freshly won freedom. Executive producer Jeffrey Katzenberg decided to limit himself to a modest 90 minutes rather than an epic three hours, so he had to edit the Bible's account of Moses down to its most salient story line. In Katzenberg's mind, the essential Moses was not a lawgiver but a liberator, the ancient world's Dr. Martin Luther King. "God sent you to be our deliverer," says his sister Miriam (voiced by Sandra Bullock).

Of course the biblical Moses also did a little thing at Mt. Sinai which had some impact on the Bible's narrative—and the rest of human history. At Sinai Moses met God and received the commandments, ten famous ones and 603 in addition. *The Prince of Egypt* alludes to this as a postscript. The movie's final moment shows our hero descending the mountain with two unidentified pieces of stone in his hands.

It is hard to say whether a 90-minute movie with Sinai and the two tablets as its climax could be conceived, but one thing's certain: as a culture we would be spooked by any portrait of Moses the man in full, liberator and lawgiver. After all, spirituality for us isn't about getting bossed around by some dead guy. We will accept Moses Luther King Jr. or no Moses at all.

Hence the most notable feature of the media coverage attending Katzenberg's movie: its insistence that Moses was quite likely made up, "merely a character in a grand historical novel, the invention of storytellers," as Jonathan Kirsch puts it in his biography. "Historians regard his existence as questionable," David Denby agreed in *The New Yorker*. *Time* cited the belief of "some scholars [that] Moses was a creation of the ancient Hebrews' binding together their own national epic out of the tales of neighbors."

Reading these remarks and watching the film that occasioned them, you had the uneasy feeling of watching small children at play on a railroad track.

■

As a culture, we would be spooked by any portrait of Moses the man in full, liberator and lawgiver.

■

Blithely, confidently, innocently, the moviemakers and commentators hadn't the slightest idea of what their views implied.

Kirsch assures us that the factuality of Moses is "less important . . . than the quest for the moral and spiritual values that we might extract from his biblical story." Denby comforts himself with the thought that whether or not Moses ever lived, "obviously he lives fully in what people have made of him." Like Santa Claus.

But that's a little too easy. If the Jewish ancestors of Denby and Kirsch never heard God speak to Moses on the mountain, then Judaism is reduced to a genealogy of delusion. As for Christians, if Israel's God offered no covenant at Sinai, which would suggest there is no God of Israel, then just what God could have fathered Jesus?

If nothing happened at Sinai, both religions are fraudulent. The scholar Abraham Joshua Heschel made this point so clearly as to break your heart: "If Moses . . . failed to find out what the will of God is, who will? . . . If God had nothing to do with the prophets [Moses being their foremost representative], then He had nothing to do with mankind." Without Moses we are alone in the universe.

It hardly needs pointing out that our culture shies from such ultimate questions, which explains why we could give Moses a few weeks of our consideration but not more. To contemplate him at any greater length is to be forced to contemplate the meaning of our lives, or their meaninglessness. **NR**

Mr. Klinghoffer, an NR senior editor, is the author of *The Lord Will Gather Me In: My Journey to Jewish Orthodoxy*, published last month by Free Press.

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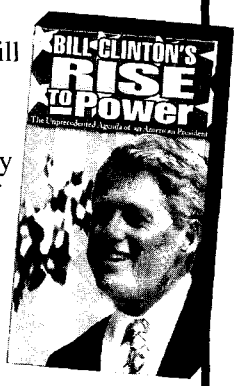

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■ FILM ■

Of Blood and a Poet

JOHN SIMON

MODERN war movies, like Tolstoy's happy families, are all alike. Old wars are another story: Salamis, Thermopylae, Cannae, Lepanto—those battles were different. But from World War I on, a certain sameness sets in. We are introduced all too briefly to far too many characters who remain interchangeable, especially so in helmets and battle gear. Shouted commands are often unintelligible, strategies and tactics hard to follow. Lately, men have begun dying more graphically, more gorily. And sometimes we see women at war. Still, though it was not coined for cinematic warfare, the old saw applies: *plus ça change* . . .

Nevertheless, some war films make it by concentrating on special aspects: ski troops, a submarine, a military hospital. Terrence Malick's ***The Thin Red Line***, from James Jones's eyewitness novel about Guadalcanal, is largely straight fighting, yet it does achieve some genuine distinction. Thus there is a lot of Jonesian philosophizing in interior monologues of various characters, sometimes in rapid succession. Though frequently sophomoric, they come, after all, largely from very young and not especially educated persons, although one of them manages a Homeric tag in the original Greek. It would be nice, however, if the same character, Sgt. Welsh (well played by Sean Penn), did not almost simultaneously declare that "a man alone is nothing" and "you've got to shut your eyes and look out for yourself."

The film was shot partly on Guadalcanal, where some of the natives participate, and mostly in Australia. To my untutored eye, it all looks seamless and persuasive. Of course, it helps that this action takes place in exotic sea- and landscapes, that soldiers move through man-high grasses where the wind soughs, and bodies elicit a thwacking sound as they push through the often dry blades. Alternatively, men move through towering forests, into which the light penetrates in seemingly separate rays, as if through tiny skylights or cathedral windows.

John Toll's cinematography works many wonders. His camera is often one of the soldiers, swaying a little side to side as it trudges on, or lurches, rushes, jumps about during battle. It captures frequent and sudden changes in weather: seas of grass undulate green and gold, water shimmers silvery-black. Periodically, the camera sidesteps into an idyllic glimpse of some bird or beast: a crocodile easing itself into a bath, an upside-down sloth or pendent cluster of bats.

At times we get blocks of color: every-

■

This will surely be the year of heated debates between partisans of *The Thin Red Line* and of *Saving Private Ryan.*

■

thing blue-green or exploding orange and red. At night, a single match may illumine no more than one eye and a bit of nose. Everything seems to be—or really is—shot in natural light. The lens takes refuge, as the soldier's gaze might, in an expanse of unbesmirched sky or lushly gilded sunset cloud banks, or is jolted by a blood-bespattered blade of grass. At times we are blinded by mist; at others, dazzled by eerie clarity.

Malick directs in psychological time. Some terrible moments stretch on and on, others race desperately by. Often more goes on in one shot than a single viewing can encompass. Pvt. Bell, demoted from officer, is haunted by memories of his wife: of the two of them in intimate situations, or her alone on a beach or a swing. Miranda Otto has that cozily homey look: pretty but not glamorous. When Bell (Ben Chaplin) gets a pitiful Dear John letter from her in voiceover, he wanders off forlornly with that scrap of white paper dangling like a slipped bandage from a limp arm. When men advance into danger, there is a special choreography as, capering to the right and left, they

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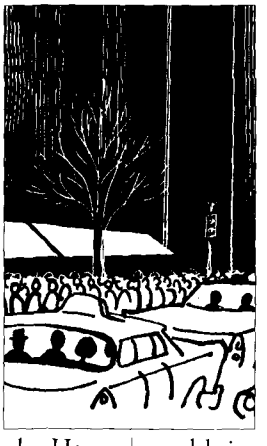
try to forestall an ambushing enemy.

The point of view changes restlessly. Now we look out of a Japanese hilltop bunker from which havoc is wreaked. Now we are privy to a walkie-talkie argument between the ambitious Colonel Tall (Nick Nolte), who orders a suicidal frontal attack, and Captain Staros (Elias Koteas, surprisingly good in an atypically sympathetic role), who refuses to sacrifice his men. Gunfire may natter sporadically or burst into sudden bombardment like an uncheckable firestorm. We may see a bullet go through someone, or we may come across a dead soldier with both legs torn off at the hip. Or, again, mere intense acting will convey that Sgt. Keck (Woody Harrelson) has blown off his own lower half.

But the emphasis is less on engulfing horror than on individual anxiety and resolve, frenzy or terror. Pvt. Witt from Kentucky, the nominal hero, often stares bemusedly as his mind monologizes; Jim Caviezel, a newish actor, has such a thoughtful, confidence-inspiring air that we easily immerse ourselves in his roving bewilderment. And so many poignant details! An old Melanesian walking unconcernedly past an army column marching in the opposite direction. Dogs (coming from where?) chomping on something (dead soldiers?) as no one heeds them. A native village that provides fleeting asylum—mothers with tots, children playing games, a singing procession—but also natives sharply bickering and an ossuary full of skulls to signal death in Arcadia.



Most of the acting is solid, nicely backed up by a score made out of Fauré's *Requiem*, Arvo Pärt, and original music by Hans Zimmer. This will surely be the year of heated debates between partisans of *Line* and of that other 160-or-so-minute epic, *Saving Private Ryan*. My vote goes to the more chaste and cohesive *Thin Red Line*.

■ The screenplay of ***Shakespeare in Love*** is credited to Marc Norman and Tom Stoppard, though the idea came from Norman's son, and the writing from Stoppard. This is a fantasy, which would be fine, save that it flagrantly defies known facts instead of working around and in between them. Still, fun is to be had with the concept of a Lady Viola de Lesseps, who, out of love of poetry and acting, gets the part of Romeo under the assumed identity of one Thomas Kent, women not being allowed on the stage. Unaware that she is right under his nose, Will falls in love with the distant Lady Viola and circuitously works his way into her bed.

For her family's social-climbing reasons, however, the young woman is promised to the nasty and impecunious Lord Wessex in a loveless marriage; he, in this year of 1593, would whisk her off to his estate in Virginia. (Anachronism runs rampant.) Many well-known figures appear: Marlowe (Rupert Everett), the manager Philip Henslowe (the excellent Geoffrey Rush), Richard Burbage, Ned Alleyn (Ben Affleck, strange among the sons of Albion), a bloody-minded young lout called John Webster, and Queen Elizabeth, sovereignly played by Judi Dench.

There are amusing inventions: the moneylender Fennyman (a supremely droll Tom Wilkinson), the ignoble nobleman Wessex (a funny Colin Firth), a stuttering tailor who becomes fluent onstage (Mark Williams), Anthony Sher as an astrologer who uncannily resembles a modern-day therapist, and Jim Carter, Imelda Staunton, and Simon Callow in other merry roles. Even Gwyneth Paltrow, whom I have never before liked, is a creditable Viola cum Thomas; only Joseph Fiennes, as Shakespeare, is a wimpy, calf-eyed nonentity. John Madden has directed with bounce and brio, and the picturesque, authentic-looking backgrounds are nicely rendered by Richard Greatrex, who, with a name like that, might as well have been in front of the camera as behind it.

The problem for me is the relentless crosscutting from bedroom to stage, with identical or similar dialogue surfacing both in Will and Viola's dalliance, and in the rehearsals of a play first called *Romeo and Ethel, the Pirate's Daughter*, which gradually evolves into you-know-what. The conceit of life imitating art and vice versa becomes a

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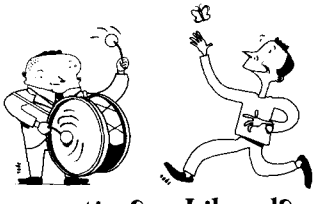

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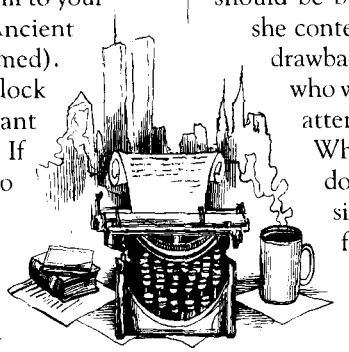
bit too mechanical; certain other parallels, or bits of leering revisionism, are likewise labored. But when a gag works, it's a corker. So Viola remarks to Will, mourning Marlowe, that she never before heard him as admiring of his rival. Comes the reply, "He wasn't dead." **NR**

■ **CITY DESK** ■

Navel Gazing

RICHARD BROOKHISER

IN the Bible, Cush is a son of Ham and the father of Nimrod, and hence the namesake of tribes in Upper Egypt or Arabia—Scriptural geography can be hazy. In New York, Kush is a bar on Orchard Street below Houston. Its location is quite definite, though the demographic geography of the neighborhood flows and mutates. Once the Lower East Side was the densest concentration of Jews on the planet. Aroud the corner from Kush, like a fossilized trilobite, sits Katz's Delicatessen, with its half-century-old sign: "Send a salami to your boy in the army" (in Ancient New Yorkese, this rhymed). Now Katz's shares a block with a 24-hour restaurant for Turkish cab-drivers. If the deliveryman fails to bring my daily Turkish newspaper in the morning, I can always pick it up here. Even more numerous in the old neighborhood than new immigrants are the kids who, with luck and hard work, might become artists some day, or at least college graduates. On Tuesday nights, the new hangout offers belly dancing.



Even though New York (unlike Detroit) is not a major magnet for Middle Eastern immigrants, it has long had a small but lively belly-dance world. Before my time, there was Greektown, just west of the theater district. Belly-dancing is not a Greek art form, but Greeks owned the clubs. My wife once mentioned the name to her orthopedist, and his eyes shone with remembrance of flings past. I remember Fazil's International, near the old Greektown, which was pretty mononational: wall-to-wall Turks. One year the hit song at Fazil's, which must have been the hit song in Anatolia two or three years before, compared love to a dum-dum bullet. Now the hardy little scene has migrated downtown.

My wife takes lessons with one of the greats, who dances under the name of Anahid. That is also her real name, since her background is Armenian. As she goes through her fifties, she says there are some moves she can no longer do, but her admirers will worry about that when anyone else is able to do what she still does. The dancer we went to Kush to see is another student of Anahid's, a charming 30-year-old who dances as Miranda. That made her eight or ten years older than her audience. My wife and I felt like Mr. and Mrs. Ancient Mariner. The physical arrangements were typical for a bar: a performance space the size of a table cloth, and a spotlight that shone directly into the dancer's eyes. At 5'8", size 6—and how could anyone be so slender so easily?—Miranda is not ideal for this dance form: belly-dancing bodies should be built for reproduction. But she contended gracefully with these drawbacks. The black-clad youths who watched her were polite and attentive, but not aficionados. When I peeled a small roll of dollar bills over her head, as a sign of appreciation, no one followed suit. Maybe they hadn't gotten checks from home that week; maybe they thought she was my moll. Kush offers Tarot card readings, which are actually rather common in downtown spots (maybe the President should try some: his answers to the 81 questions didn't work). But it also provides amenities that are specifically Middle Eastern, such as *hookahs* and *mehendi*, or short-term henna tattooing.

I can see the sneers on the lips of balletomane friends at the very mention of belly dancing: Where is the line? the anorexia? the silly plots? Belly dancers plead guilty on articles two and three. But the best of them are well aware of those Platonic force fields that stretch out from properly held limbs. Also on the credit side are interesting rhythms, and an activity that can be performed even after the age at which Margot Fonteyn quit. The great limitation is that it is a solo art. You would rather watch the torture scene in *Lawrence of Arabia* than the choreography of most Middle Eastern dance companies.

What is most interesting about the Orchard Street Port Said is that it is not an ethnic hangout. The band was genuinely international—two Armenians

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When I pealed a small roll of dollar bills over her head, as a sign of appreciation, no one followed suit.

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and a gypsy. At any New York belly-dance gig, the nationalities that drown one another's old countries in blood lie down like lions and lambs in the presence of a bad sound system. But Miranda's real name is Cathy, and her crowd was all-American.

This is worth remembering in the wake of the bombing of Iraq. Americans will try almost anything as a flavor. In a famous passage, Crèvecoeur described the "new man," the American, as a fusion of nationalities. He was wrong—the significant divisions among 18th-century Americans were among varieties of WASP. But on the bedrock of homogeneity, a skyscraper of easygoing curiosity arose. New York, a city of 7 million, may have the widest variety of flavors to choose from, but the impulse to sample runs right through the amber waves of grain. It can be harnessed to all sorts of pernicious ends, from tolerating Communists to open borders, and it exacts a price on what is tasted: to what extent have American Catholicism and Judaism become flavors? The kids at Kush don't endorse polygamy, or female circumcision, but they don't mind veil-work. And in this, they show good judgment. **NR**

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WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

Senator Hillary?

NEW YORK, DECEMBER 15

At least one remove from the impeachment abbatoir, the mind turns to flights of fancy recently going the circuit. One of these is to the effect that Hillary will run for the Senate from New York State in the year 2000.

Surely not!

But why not? She is at least as skilled on her feet as any sitting member of the Senate. Few people can claim greater experience in the Washington scene, including dealings with Congress as when she lobbied for the health plan of 1993, which was largely her instrument.

But why should she be allowed to coast into New York and take the nomination away from someone who is senior and ready to go?

There is no senior Democrat in New York who is situated as a nominee for that seat in the sense that Al Gore is situated as nominee-presumptive for president. There are a dozen Democrats who would like the nomination, but not one whom the public generally acknowledges as owed it.

But what about the . . . personal business. Hillary/Bill?

There is of course the outside possibility that she will divorce her husband some time between now and then. Very remote, given the stake she has in the present arrangement. But of course such things do happen. If Priscilla Hiss could divorce Alger, Juliet could divorce Romeo.

Well, wouldn't that eliminate her?

Why? In the current mood? To begin with, those who are angry over the Clinton scene are angry not with her but with him. They might be tangentially angry with her for putting up with his satyriasis, but almost certainly not in critical numbers.

American women are of two cultures on this subject. Consider Tom Wolfe's book, *A Man in Full*. You will want to read it irrespective of its bearing on Hillary for senator. There is one woman in the novel who when she hears about her husband's sportif behavior on a business trip to Helsinki just plain closes the door good and shut, marriage over, out, go away.

But the principal female character does nothing—it is the husband who acts. Why? Wolfe is pretty provocative on this subject. Charles Croker divorces his wife, after 29 years of marriage, because of—his own words—"sex and vanity." Wolfe has picked up on something very widely accepted. History reminds us of kings and emperors who leave their wives because they didn't bear them a son, or because different foreign alliances were needed; whatever. But marriage dissolutions come about frequently these days because men, especially the rich and powerful, bend to such straightforward impulses as Tom Wolfe describes, sex and vanity.

You're not suggesting Bill would divorce Hillary in order to marry a bimbo?

No. Bill's bimbos are under the table, so to speak. No one would blame her if she left him. The net point here is that the separation of the two would not taint her eligibility, in the eyes of the voters, to serve as senator.

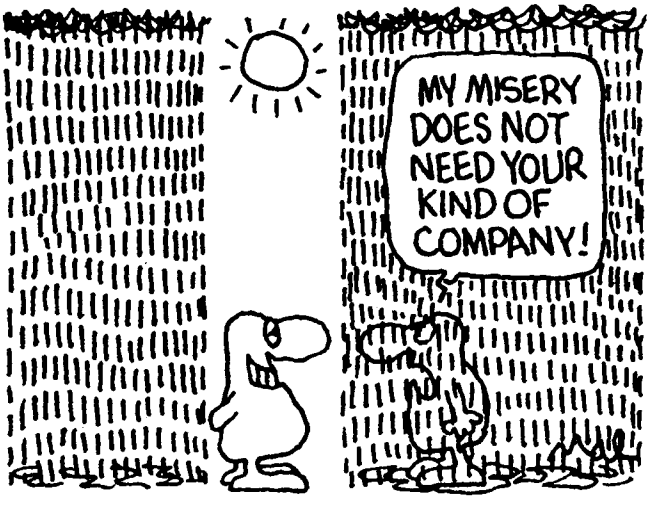
What would Bill be supposed to do while she ran for the office?

Again, there are variables. Conceivably he would be out of office. Not because of a Senate conviction, but because of a second string of indictments resulting in his resignation. Conceivably she too would go down with the ship, but not necessarily: she might be thought a tragic figure who attempted to keep the ship afloat for as long as she could, but the pumps couldn't, finally, stand the strain they were put under.

And then if Bill stays on to finish his term, what would be so wrong with her announcing in the spring of 2000 that she intends to continue in public life and would be happy to step into the Senate at the same moment when her husband steps out of the White House?

Wait a minute. There are residential requirements aren't there?

Yes, but they are hardly inhibiting. The law requires only that at the time of election, the candidate have a residence in New York State and vote in that election. That is easy to arrange. Robert Kennedy did it in 1964, became a legal resident and went on to the Senate. James L. Buckley did it in 1970, and went on to the Senate. No problem. Check with Dick Morris, see if he agrees.



Season's End . . .

NEW YORK, DECEMBER 18

It may be of incidental interest to the reader what are the disciplines of the newspaper columnist, two of them relevant to this columnist, writing on this day. I'm not sure it is anywhere cast in stone, but this columnist, perhaps because of seniority, shares with other seniors the license to four weeks of vacation per year. Mine I covetously distribute here and there through the year, the fourth and last, for 1998, lying directly ahead.

So what happens on the eve of a vacation from writing about current affairs?

A vote to impeach the President is suspended and a few hours later, rescheduled. A war explodes over Iraq, a very strange war: It is intended, says the Commander-in-Chief, to take advantage, among other things, of solidarity with our allies. Later that day, Russia, in protest, recalled its ambassador.

Late that same afternoon, the rumor mill begins to pump out the story that the Speaker-elect, who has just made the critical decision to reschedule the impeachment vote, was himself an adulterer. A Republican congressman from South Carolina, a guest on *Crossfire*, says that although the Leader's "indiscretions"—that word was used, "inappropriate behavior" having got shopworn—are of a very different order from what President Clinton did, even so, the political impact of the disclosure was likely to affect the debate. "Affect the debate?" he was asked. How? "Well, we just can't say, can't predict, at this point." This on vacation eve.

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff comes on. His job is to suggest that Wednesday was an opportune day to begin the attack on Iraq, quite apart from any

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political developments in the House of Representatives. The general was most eager to show the fruits of the American assault, so he came out with a picture of a barracks compound. "Here," he said pointing to a photograph of the compound, "is how it looked before. Here," he moved the pointer to the parallel picture below, "is how it looks now." The buildings were gutted. Were there generals and admirals in there, gone to their reward? one journalist asked. The general did not know, could not answer that. What was established was that when missiles land, they do a given amount of damage to what they land on, which is good news inasmuch as the missiles cost one million dollars each, and we fired off 200 of them on Wednesday.

On the same day there was much fury expressed by groups of citizens who protested what they saw as the imminent impeachment of their President. Judiciary Committee Chairman Henry Hyde had offhandedly asked a questioner, Had he ever been to Auschwitz?, going on to say that that is the kind of thing that happens if you neglect the rule of law. That line of expression ("slippery slope") is very common to lawyers, and one hears it every day, as when the ACLU warns that if you permit a prayer to be said in a public school, the next thing you will have is not Auschwitz, necessarily, but an Established Religion. The remark was bitterly protested by Elie Wiesel, who does not like to hear the word Auschwitz used to illustrate anything other than . . . Auschwitz.

But on the protest front, tempers are frayed, and projections are alarmed, if not exactly alarming. Harvard Law Professor Alan Dershowitz, who protests everything on earth except the guilt of most of his clients, advised everyone that a vote against impeachment was a vote against bigotry, against fundamentalism, against anti-environmentalists, against the pro-life movement." Author Toni Morrison saw him, and raised him one: The Hyde people in Congress are "an arrogant theocracy genuflecting at the knees of a minority." Author Blanche Cook dismissed the Congressional majority as "filthy mean-minded swiny people," getting down to the root of things. Elizabeth Holtzman, the former Congresswoman gave a judicial explanation. "What is at stake is the right of the American people, by majority vote, to elect a President of the United States and not have it undone by moralizing, sanctimonious—but the crowd roared over her last words, leaving us to wonder that Ms. Holtzman is so enthusiastic about the right of the American people, who chased her out of office.

What a time to be leaving the country! On the other hand, maybe, the way it sounds, leaving the country is exactly the thing to do . . . get out before it's too late; get out before the swinish theocracy ruins life itself! Author Tom Wolfe would round that off better, he would talk about "life itself!!!"

But it was great during the 200-plus years it lasted, and I wish you a merry Christmas.

Two Old Pols Talk It Over

NEW YORK, DECEMBER 11

HARRY and Jim, late yesterday afternoon after the eighth hour of the weary proceedings, agreed to meet at Jim's for a drink and a pick-up dinner. Both wives were out of town—that they were traveling together to visit family in Hanover was nicely coincidental. It had been that way with Harry and Jim, classmates in college and at law school, right through the amiable divide, when one went up to the capital as an assemblyman for the Democrats, while Jim went up as a junior Republican. Now they were both in the House of Representatives and both served on the Judiciary Committee.

"Your guy Schippers is a bulldog"—Harry referred to the performance of the Hyde Committee's chief prosecutor, David Schippers, an independent lawyer and a registered Democrat, as it happens.

"Well, you people haven't made it easy to do anything less than that. We have to hammer down, again and again and again, on Clinton's lies because your people are always raising these chicken—"

"Watch your language!" Harry showed mock concern. "Our side, as you call it, has to do whatever it can to protect the integrity of the Constitution."

"Including lies?"

"Including whatever interpretations can be put on words or deeds the effect of which is to mitigate their gravity under the law. If you were using a green umbrella and the killer had been identified with a blue umbrella, what we'd talk about is the umbrella, not the killer."

"I know, I know, Harry. But at the same time you've moved into a different operating system. Now that's the kind of thing—the color of the umbrella—that you're left stressing, what constitutes sexual relations, I mean oh my God! Look, last year—let's pretend—I gave you four presents. One was a miniature Eiffel Tower. The other was a Ouija Board. Then a walking stick with an alarm clock on it. And a box of chocolates. 'What presents, Mr. Congressman, did you give your colleague last year?' 'Well there may have been other things, but all I remember is a box of chocolates.' Pour me another drink, Harry, though I don't know what we could toast to."

"But we've had no alternative, Jim. You gave us no alternative when the Republican House voted to constitute an inquiry into Articles of Impeachment. So we had to ask, 'Was all that crappy stuff the President did a warrant to oust him from office?' We came up with a negative on that one. A negative on that one meant that we had to get out our drills and sledgehammers to try to establish that the . . . that the umbrella was green, not blue. If you had satisfied yourselves to say: Clinton did a lousy thing and he lied about it, so let's put it on the record that he didn't get away with it—I'd have voted for you. I'd vote tomorrow for censure, if Hyde and Newt give us a chance."

"But *you're* trying to make it simple, because it's convenient—nothing personal, Harry. But it is convenient to be telling yourself: I know he did all those things, but the other side wants to make all those things add up to throwing the guy out of the White House. *We're* saying, perjury and justice obstruction are prima facie grounds for asking the Senate: Do two-thirds of you believe Clinton should be removed because he has disgraced the office and given evidence of bad character and unreliable judgment? In order to try to prevent this question from orderly argument before the appropriate body, as specified under the Constitution, you're—I gotta use this language, Harry—you're undermining civilized intercourse. You're doing that by saying he didn't really commit perjury, he didn't really have sex, he just forgot about the Eiffel Tower and the Ouija Board. You're doing what the lawyers did for O. J. Simpson a couple of years ago, and for a while there—you know, I know—they were whispering, 'You can't talk to black folk about the facts, if it's a black guy at the receiving end.' Conversation with a common purpose in mind (did O.J. kill the girl?) is over. We give up."

"You give up on me, Jim?"

"No, but that's because we've shared a lot together like, well, like taking oaths to defend the Constitution. But it does mean that whenever I see you, I'm going to have to say to myself, 'I love this guy, even though he voted against impeachment.' And that's going to take a lot of loving, man."

—UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

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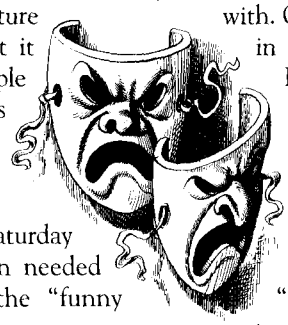
■ THE MISANTHROPE'S CORNER ■

FLORENCE KING

I AM writing this column at the end of the year so it is axiomatic that I am in a foul mood. Not that I have anything against the end of the year—on the contrary, I'm in favor of the end of just about everything—it's the reading matter that comes with it that gets me down.

I refer to "Year in Review" magazine round-ups and the TV equivalent known as "Best Of."

Once upon a time, Americans were not crammed full of news. Today's journalists wax nostalgic about the heyday of newspaper readership, when every big city had at least two dailies and circulation wars were fought to capture a well-informed public, but it wasn't quite that way. People *bought* a lot of newspapers but they didn't necessarily read them. It was more a case of needing them.



Before $200 toys and Saturday morning cartoons, children needed what were then called the "funny papers." Before the average woman owned two dozen cookbooks she needed recipes from the "woman's page." Lacking scientifically calibrated baggies for every conceivable sort of waste, households needed a lot of newsprint. And men who felt the need to carry *something* but were not yet bold enough to buy briefcases bought newspapers, rolling them up like walking sticks and slapping them against their legs—a twice-daily male ritual, to and from work, that circulation statistics rendered as a morning and afternoon paper in every home.

We got our news from radio and newsreels, but we still came up short. Even if you went to the movies every time the picture changed, you saw only three newsreels a week, plus an occasional *March of Time*, always hideously boring. A chain of theaters called the Trans-Lux showed nothing but newsreels, but only big cities had them and the audiences were overwhelmingly male, meaning that women wouldn't go if they were alone and couldn't go if they had children with them, which they usually did.

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Into the breach rode *Life* magazine with "The Year in Pictures." Nearly everything in it seemed new, including the spreads on the ubiquitous Dionne quintuplets. Some photos were standard but they were never stale; even the obligatory shot of professional debutante Brenda Frazier closing the Stork Club showed her slumped in a different direction from last time.

Now, thanks to instant replays, pool reporting, looping, and other marvels of communication, year-end round-ups show us not what we have missed but what we have already been saturated with. Open a Year in Review or tune in to a Best Of and you are in Kafka's castle, a beset "K." wandering back and forth between a picture of Ken Starr's coffee cup and a picture of Ken Starr's garbage bag, pursued by Barney Frank lisping his eternal riddle, "What did the Moving Finger touch and when did he touch it?"

Like a looming execution date, seeing and hearing the same thing over and over concentrates the mind, but instead of eliminating mental detritus, it enhances it and gives it center stage. Somewhere in the middle of my third Year in Review issue I concluded that nothing much had happened in 1998 that could compare in importance to Newt Gingrich's lapel pin.

That huge, silvery rune held, I was sure, the key to the universe. I stared at it every time I saw his picture, wondering what it was, what it said, why he always wore it, and why it was so big. A lapel-pin round-up would have helped—"Who's Stuck with What?"—but nowhere in the endless pages of lists, up-and-down arrows, and broken picture frames could I find one. *But I had to know!* That's when I went a little crazy. Like the dog in the Beggin' Strips commercial who's sure he smells bacon, I got out my magnifying glass and ransacked all my round-ups, looking for pictures of Newt to try to read what was on the pin, to no avail. The one thing I wanted to know was the one thing nobody had rounded up.

If you've read one Quotables round-up you've read them all, or rather heard them all, since most are printed soundbites recycled by the 'zines and then rerecycled on Best Of television specials. Quotables come in two models: the All-Purpose and the Rosebud. The first lends itself to a build-your-own-quotation kit consisting of key words that can be put together to form whatever sentiment the speaker wishes to express.

TAKE, for example, those popular building blocks of the scintillating sentence: Feel, Sort of, Move on, Heal, Children. Liberal wordsmiths can say, "I sort of feel we should heal and move on for the sake of the children." Moderate Republican wordsmiths can say, "I feel we should sort of move on to heal America's children." The articulate pedophile can say, "I sort of feel I heal when I move on children," and yours truly can say, "Keelhaul children."

The Rosebud is a quote associated with a single individual and contains the essence of his personality. Unfortunately, Rosebuds are fragile flowers. The original Rosebud was uttered once and never came our way again, but the Quotable Rosebud is repeated so often that it becomes the last Rosebud of summer. Lucianne Goldberg's "I love dish!" is dead on the vine, an essence of nothing except the women Marie Antoinette made the mistake of cultivating: the Duchesse de Polignac comes to mind.

Now for my own Year in Review. I think I've found the bribery charge needed for removal. Why did the White House transfer Monica Lewinsky to a Pentagon office containing a Republican woman known to harbor intense anti-Clinton feelings? Was she perhaps instructed to befriend Linda Tripp and bribe her with that condo in Australia?

I have always believed that Hillary was an emotionally insecure man's insurance against abandonment. When Clinton married her she was a plain Jane that no man, particularly no Southern man, would try to take away from him. Now she is no longer plain, and Al Gore may need to appoint a vice president soon.

Why not? The country is finished anyhow so we might as well have some fun. **NR**

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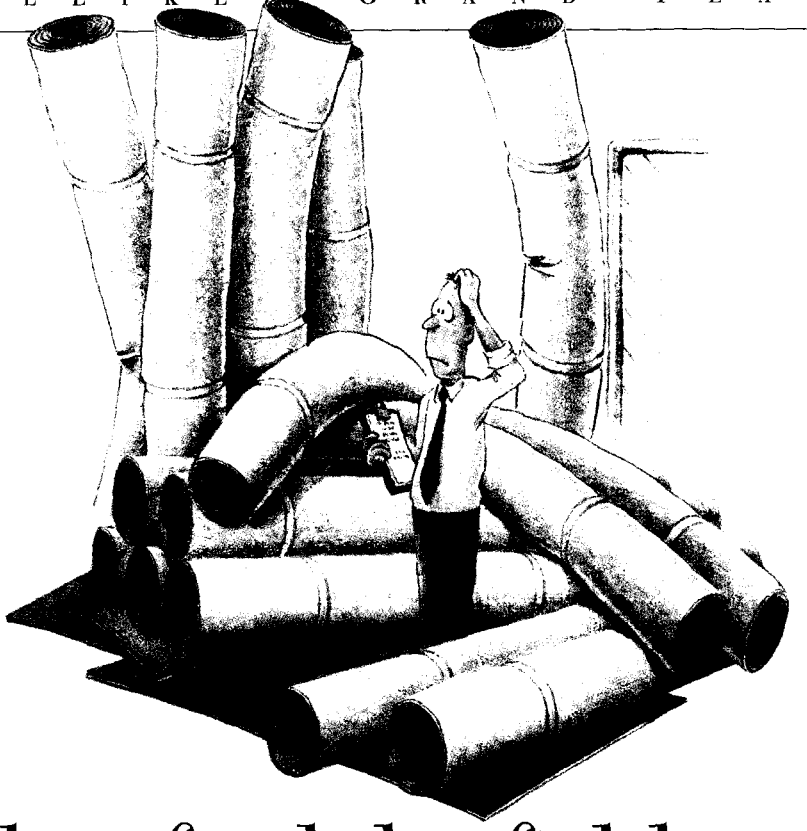

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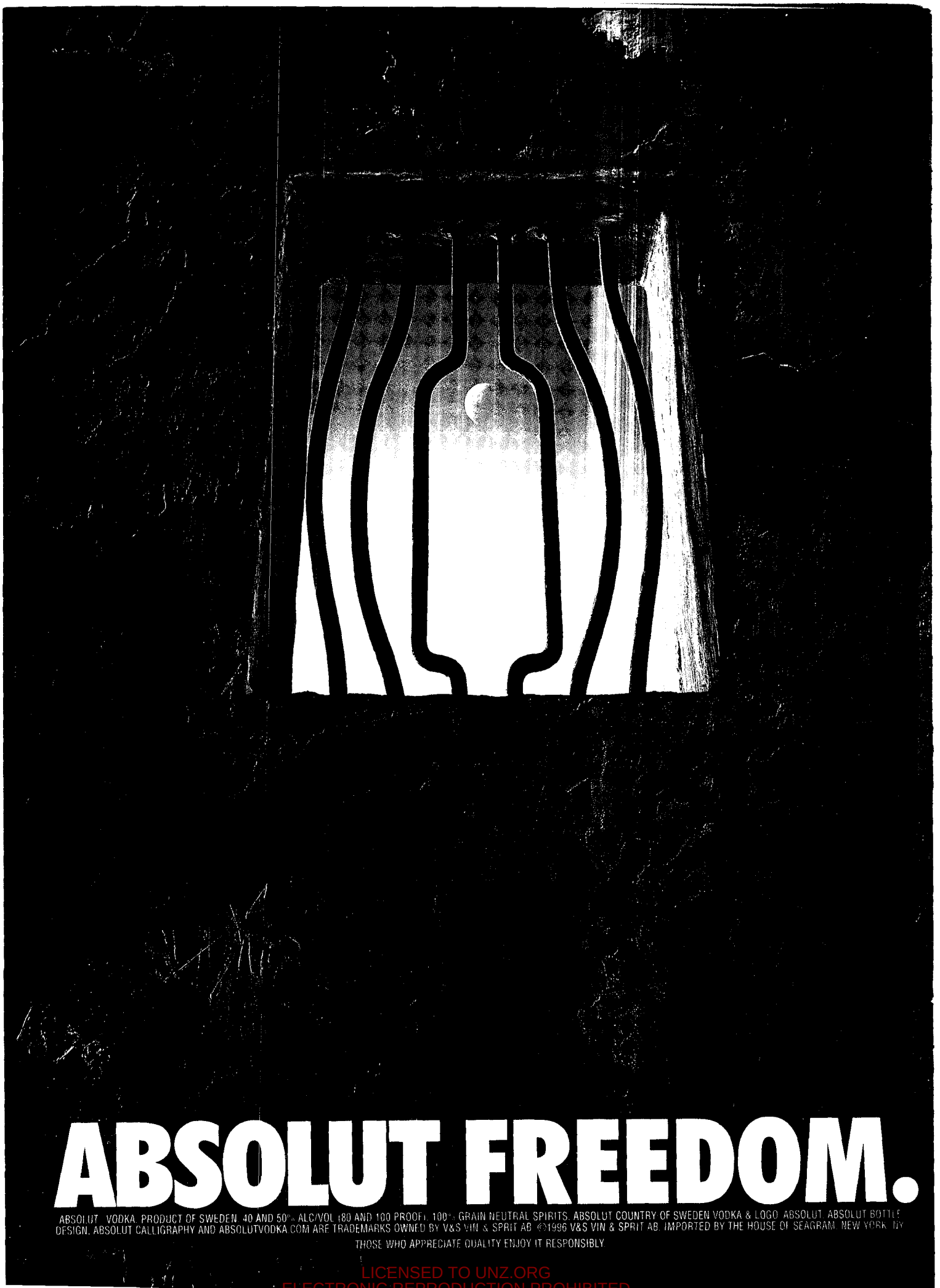
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